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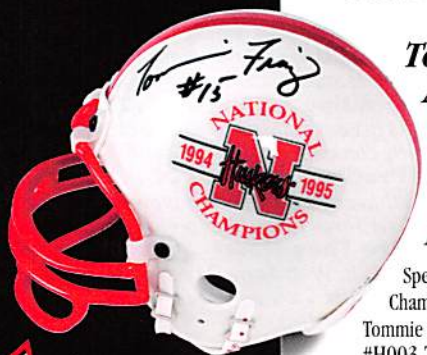
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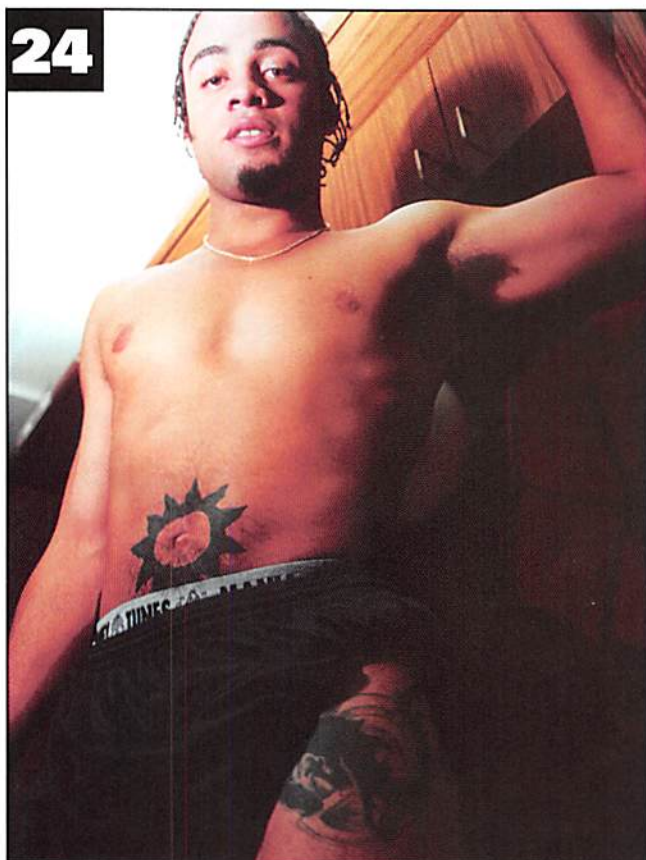
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**AUGUST 1998 • Volume 18, No. 7**



## 12 A Question Of Leadership

Grant Wistrom and Jason Peter led by example in 1997, driving their teammates as well as themselves through winter conditioning, spring practice and the summer and fall camps. They were relentless. But that was last year. Who will fill that void this season?  
By Mike Babcock

## 24 Artist's Touch

Split end John Gibson received plenty of ink coming out of high school, but it wasn't all confined to the sports section of the paper.

## NEXT ISSUE

Look for the review of the Louisiana Tech game and a preview of Alabama-Birmingham around Sept. 3.

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## Lincoln, Osborne?

The ceremony dedicating Memorial Stadium to Coach Osborne was magnificent. The tributes he received from all his former players spoke volumes about this great man and the legacy he left behind. Renaming the field at Memorial Stadium after him should only be the first step in honoring him. I think they should rename the university, or better yet, the entire state after Coach Osborne.

Charles Neal  
Grand Island, Neb.

## NFL Huskers

Congratulations to all the Huskers selected in the NFL draft and the teams that selected them. Good luck to all the teams that passed these players over — you're going to need it.

Todd Harken  
Omaha, Neb.

## Quarterback Quandary

Despite Scott Frost's departure, it is a fact that every head coach in the nation would love to have the talent at the quarterback position that Coach Solich does. He has two outstanding players in Bobby Newcombe and Eric Crouch who can both step in and run the offense at any time. Newcombe is obviously the better choice, but from all indications, it is clear that Crouch can also play at the major college level. Both players will have a hand in leading Nebraska to the promised land and another national title this season.

Reggie Watson  
Lincoln, Neb.

## No Glitches With Solich

Nebraska fans have always had high expectations when it comes to football. Frank Solich is feeling the pressure of not only succeeding a legend but also of coaching the defending national champions. He does, however, have a deep talent pool to work with this season, as always. He also probably learned a few tricks of the trade over the last two decades while he was assisting Coach Osborne. The Huskers will not see any noticeable difference when Frank Solich begins the new era of Nebraska domination.

Louis Edwards  
Nashville, Tenn.

## Executive Decision

President Clinton's idea to have Nebraska and Michigan settle the National Championship debate on the South Lawn of the White House (*Hail To The Champs*, June/July 1998) is quite possibly the best idea he has had since he took office. It would have been fun to watch Scott Frost run over Charles Woodson and the Wolverines in the president's backyard. Fortunately, with the Bowl Alliance finally in place and a national championship game on the horizon, the Huskers won't have to wait for a presidential mandate this season to claim sole possession of the title that will rightfully be theirs when it is all said and done.

Mary Kendrick  
Lincoln, Neb.

## McBride Is The Man

Defensive coordinator Charlie McBride is nothing short of a genius. Sure, the numbers are great for the analysts to talk about, but the results speak for themselves. It's difficult to lose two All-Americans from the line and improve the defense, but the other players waiting to step in will prove their worth. Under Coach McBride's brilliant guidance, some of these young men may go on to be All-Americans themselves.

Pat Jacobs  
Davenport, Iowa

## Praise For Ahman

I want to go on record as saying that of all the Huskers taken in the NFL draft, Ahman Green will prove to be the best of the bunch. He is a hard runner who never got the respect he deserved from the national media and it is unbelievable that he fell as far as he did in the draft. Seattle is lucky to have a running back like Ahman Green and I don't think it will be too long before he is a regular 1,000-yard runner in the NFL.

Darden Gentry  
Lincoln, Neb.

## Got Something To Say?

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## Huskers Illustrated

PUBLISHER  
Robert Bennett

EDITOR  
Chris Greer

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR  
Mike Babcock

PRODUCTION MANAGER  
Jeff Cannon

EDITORIAL COORDINATOR  
Shawn Heilbron

PRODUCTION  
Mario Talkington, Steve Roe

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS  
Mark Derowitsch, James Hale, Steve Sipple, Curt McKeever, Bill Doleman, Todd Henrichs, Nebraska Sports Information Office

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS  
Scott Bruhn, Doug DeVoe, Jon Waller, Ryan Soderlin, Lisa Hall

SPORTS MARKETING  
& ADVERTISING DIRECTOR  
Jeff Tudor  
For Advertising Information Call:  
(402) 423-3405

INTERNET MANAGER  
Jason Horne

ADVERTISING COORDINATOR  
Danni Usrey

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR  
JoAnn Hinson Leath

CIRCULATION  
Ann Johnston

ACCOUNTING  
Carolyn Rhodes

SUBSCRIPTION  
MARKETING MANAGER  
Dee Dee Vaughan

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**E-Mail Addresses**

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Editor: [huskersedit@sportscom.com](mailto:huskersedit@sportscom.com)  
Circulation: [huskercirc@sportscom.com](mailto:huskercirc@sportscom.com)



# Seminole Heat

*Who better than friendly rival Bobby Bowden to roast Tom Osborne?*

**F**lorida State coach Bobby Bowden was scheduled to be a featured speaker at a roast of Tom Osborne in Omaha on Aug. 23. The roast was just eight days before the Seminoles' season opener against Texas A&M in the Kickoff Classic, an indication of Bowden's affection for Osborne.

"I wouldn't do it for anybody else, I don't think," Bowden said in a telephone interview from Tallahassee, Fla. He planned to fly into Omaha that afternoon and return immediately afterward.

Johnny Rodgers, Nebraska's first Heisman Trophy winner and one of the organizers of the roast and other events in Lincoln and Omaha that weekend, contacted Bowden.

"I wanted to do it," said Bowden, who also was a

featured speaker at a banquet honoring Osborne a week after Florida State defeated the Cornhuskers 18-16 in the 1994 Orange Bowl game.

"But I told Johnny there was no time during the season I could get up there."

Even though the Sunday in late August wasn't ideal, Bowden accepted.

He and Osborne have become good friends over the last several years, "after the series," Bowden said. Nebraska and Florida State played a four-game series from 1980 to 1986.

All four games were at Memorial Stadium, with the Cornhuskers winning in 1981 (34-14) and 1986 (34-17) and the Seminoles winning in 1980 (18-14) and 1985 (17-13). The teams also have played each other in four bowl games since then, with Florida State winning all four.

Coaches at the two schools began sharing ideas after the series ended. "It's hard to get tight with a staff when you're playing them," said Bowden. "You wouldn't be swapping ideas then."

But since then, both programs have benefited from the exchange. Nebraska borrowed from Florida State

**"Tom's so straightforward, you can tell stories about him and they're funny because everybody knows that's not him."**

— Bobby Bowden





Mark Kraus

Though their personalities may differ, Bowden and Osborne have formed a lasting friendship that is lacking in most college football circles.

defensive coordinator Mickey Andrews in switching to a 4-3 base defense, and the Cornhuskers' shotgun formations on offense have been patterned after Florida State's.

Likewise, the Seminoles have benefitted from their association with Nebraska, according to Bowden. The Cornhuskers "have a uniqueness to their program," he said. "There's nothing like it."

Bowden and Osborne met in 1980. "We were getting dressed, ready for the ballgame, and Tom came by and knocked on the door," said Bowden. Later, "he became one of my favorite people."

"We'd go on (coaches') trips, and I got to talking with him. He and I confided a lot."

The two also shared the same media-forged burden until the 1993 season: Neither had coached a team to a national title. "I was catching it here, and Tom was catching it there," Bowden said.

With Florida State ranked No. 1 and Nebraska ranked No. 2 going into the 1994 Orange Bowl game, however, "one of us had to win it (the national championship)," he said.

"That's why the name of

the game is hanging in there."

The Cornhuskers won three national titles in the next four seasons, Osborne's last as head coach. Had it defeated rival Florida, Florida State would have played them in the 1996 Fiesta Bowl game.

"I'm glad we didn't catch them then," the 68-year-old Bowden said with a laugh.

Bowden's personality is in marked contrast to Osborne's. Bowden is a good old boy with a down-home sense of humor. Osborne is considerably more reserved. He's not humorless, though, according to Bowden. "Tom's got some very dry humor," he said. "It sneaks up on you."

"You spend three days thinking about whether he was telling the truth or not."

Bowden didn't anticipate encountering any difficulties roasting Osborne. "Tom's so straightforward, you can tell stories about him and they're funny because everybody knows that's not him," he said. "But if you had to tell the truth, it would be tough. You might as well be talking about Abraham Lincoln."

Another of those slated to speak at the Osborne roast was former NFL quarterback John Brodie, who was a San Francisco 49ers teammate in 1959, which was Osborne's rookie season. ■

# QUICK HITS

What's Happening In Nebraska Athletics?

## Two Picked In MLB Draft

Former Husker shortstop **Bryan Schmidt** and pitcher **Matt Schuld** were selected on the final day of the 1998 Major League Baseball Draft.

Schmidt, who was the starting shortstop for the Huskers the past two seasons and earned honorable mention All-Big 12 honors this past season, was picked in the 33rd round by the San Diego Padres. He was the 982nd selection overall.

"I am elated," said Schmidt, a native of Sacramento, Calif. "It's been a dream of mine since I was four years old to someday get selected in the draft. This is one of the happiest days of my life."

Schuld, a transfer from Baylor who pitched one year for the Huskers, was picked in the 34th round by Tampa Bay. The Sioux Falls, S.D., native was the 1,032 selection overall.

Outfielder **Adam Stern**, a native of London, Ontario, who signed with the Huskers this spring, was selected in the 22nd round by the Toronto Blue Jays.

## Reitsma Still Has Game On A Different Court

**Lisa Reitsma**, a two-time first-team All-America outside hitter for the Nebraska volleyball team, has decided to join coach **Paul Sanderford** and the Nebraska women's basketball team.

Reitsma chose to return to Nebraska for one more season to play basketball and complete her degree. Reitsma, a 6-foot-4 center from Sanborn, Iowa, was a Class 3A first-team all-state selection at Western Christian High School. She averaged 18 points and six blocked shots per game and was chosen *Des Moines Register's* 1994 High School Girls Athlete of the Year after earning all-state honors in both basketball and volleyball.

"I'm really excited about Lisa joining our team," Sanderford said. "She is extremely quick for her size and she is very athletic. With her quickness and leaping ability and timing, I think she also has great potential as a shot blocker. I think Lisa's experience playing volleyball at the highest level and in big games will carry over for our basketball team."

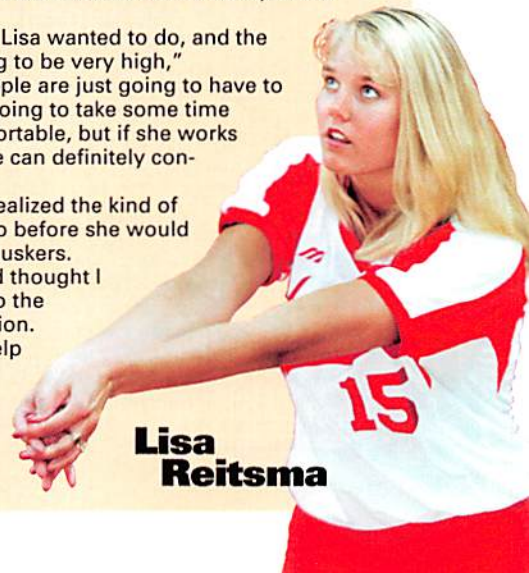
Reitsma was a three-year starter for coach **Terry Pettit's** Nebraska volleyball team, leading the Huskers to an NCAA title as a sophomore in 1995. She ranks second on NU's career list with 1,633 kills. She also ranks sixth all-time at Nebraska with 337 block assists and added 35 block solos. She was a three-time first-team all-conference selection and the 1996 Big 12 Player of the Year.

Although Reitsma has won high acclaim on the volleyball court, Sanderford said she would have to play a lot of basketball this summer to ease the transition from volleyball to basketball.

"It was something Lisa wanted to do, and the expectations are going to be very high," Sanderford said. "People are just going to have to understand that it is going to take some time before she feels comfortable, but if she works hard this summer, she can definitely contribute to our team."

Reitsma said she realized the kind of work she needed to do before she would be ready to help the Huskers.

"Coach Sanderford thought I had potential to add to the team in the post position. We both think I can help the program out a little bit," Reitsma said. "It will definitely be a big adjustment. I have so much to work on." ■



**Lisa Reitsma**



## Notes And Quotes From Around The League

While we await the first touchdown and turnover of the 1998 football season, some athletic directors are already focused on the 1999 campaign. Perhaps we should make that fuming instead of focused. The Big 12 brass quietly released the league's composite 1999 schedule two weeks ago. Considering the roar coming from the athletic directors at Oklahoma State and Oklahoma, it's no wonder the Big 12 elected not to make a big deal out of the approved schedule. To say OSU's **Terry Don Phillips** and OU's **Joe Castiglione** are mad as hell might not be totally accurate, but to say the two ADs aren't going to take it anymore is spot on. The two schools informed the league several weeks ago that they wanted the OSU-OU Bedlam Battle played Thanksgiving weekend, not just in 1999, but for the foreseeable future.

"We served notice that we need to move that (Bedlam) game to Thanksgiving week," Phillips said.

Not only did Big 12 officials reject the request, they added insult by scheduling OU to host Baylor on Nov. 26, 1999, the day after Thanksgiving.

"Terry Don and I told everybody that we wanted our game that weekend," a miffed Castiglione said. "We want to play it either Friday night, Saturday afternoon or Saturday night."

And the two ADs remain determined to start that Thanksgiving week tradition in 1999. That's why neither school has released next season's schedule. They plan to do plenty of juggling, with the Bedlam Game switch their No. 1 priority.

"We believe there is still an opportunity to get this worked out for the 1999 season," Phillips said. "In all deference to the conference, it's extremely tough to work out a schedule that pleases everybody. They work hard and in good faith, and sometimes it's favorable to you and sometimes it's not."



**Neuheisel and McCarney may find moving trucks in front of their houses in January if their teams don't rebound from last season's less than stellar outputs.**

### Short Shots

Texas A&M signed 16 prospects last February, but only 12 reported for fall camp. Quarterback **Chip Ambres** and wide receiver **Choo Freeman** opted to sign professional baseball contracts, while academic problems have sidelined wide receiver **Robert Ferguson** and running back **Jesse Hunnicutt**. . . Kansas State awaits word on the status of junior

college All-American running back **Frank Murphy**. NCAA officials are checking into Murphy's purchase of a 1985 BMW, which was valued at \$3,200. Speculation is that Murphy will miss K-State's first two games. Ranked No. 6 in the coaches' preseason national poll, the Wildcats should be able to compete successfully against Indiana State and Northern Illinois without Murphy. . . Most agree that the three Big 12 coaches who need to win this year or update their resumes are Colorado's **Rick Neuheisel**, Oklahoma's **John Blake** and Iowa State's **Dan McCarney**. "Honestly, I don't feel any more pressure this year than any other year," said McCarney, who has gone 6-27 in three seasons with the Cyclones. "We took over a program that had bottomed out. We've continued to stick to our foundation. It's a foundation that is built on rock, not sand." It's a foundation that also appears a little rocky after McCarney signed 18 junior college players last February. ■ —

**By Dave Sittler**

## EYE IN THE SKY

When Nebraska opens the season on Aug. 29 against Louisiana Tech in the Eddie Robinson Football Classic, **Frank Solich** will be on the sideline for the first time since the 1986 season. For the past 11 seasons, he has been up above in the coaches' box. He replaced **Gene Huey** there after Huey left Nebraska for Ohio State.

Now, his place will be taken by **Turner Gill**.

The Cornhusker quarterbacks coach has mixed emotions about moving up on game day. How will that work from his point of view? "I don't know, to be honest with you," said Gill.

"We kind of sat down and talked about it, (whether to) be on the field or in the press box. Initially, I'd say I definitely want to be on the field. That's what I've done since I've been around coaching."

By being on the sideline, he could talk to the quarterbacks face-to-face, Gill said.

"But as far as Coach Solich is concerned, since he would be the offensive coordinator and calling the plays, he felt like the best thing for us as a staff would be for me to be upstairs."

"The bottom line is, I want what's best for all of us offensively and what's best for him in calling the plays. He felt like that's what he would like for me to do. And I said that's fine."

Gill has assumed more responsibility with the quarterbacks since **Tom Osborne** stepped aside. Osborne, who worked with the quarterbacks as well as the wide receivers and coordinated the offense when he coached for **Bob Devaney**, continued to do so after he succeeded Devaney as head coach.

Osborne also was one of the coaches in the press box on game day.

Even after Gill was hired as quarterbacks coach, Osborne continued to work with them and grade them. Solich, however, "leaned more on me for the majority of the grades," said Gill.

"Coach Osborne, he specifically graded every one of the (quarterback) plays and I specifically graded every one of the plays. Coach Solich did it a couple of times just to compare and see how we did. But really, I did the majority of the grading. I guess if you want to say, it's slightly different." ■



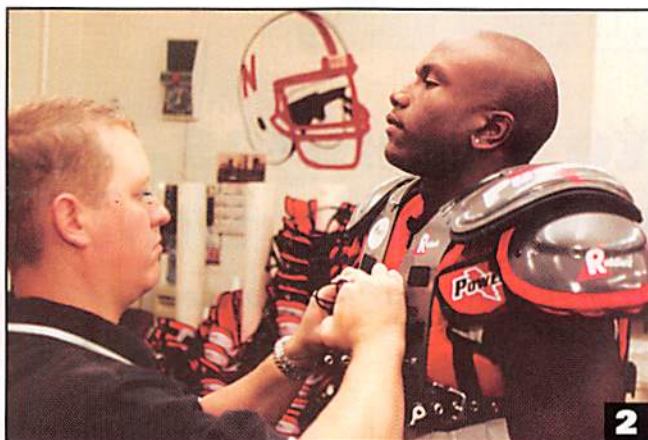
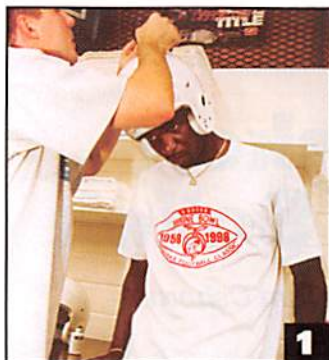
Turner GILL

## RandomQUOTE

**"Even in winning, sometimes, you know you didn't play well enough for a share of people, maybe you didn't score enough points, maybe you made a bad call or two along the way."**

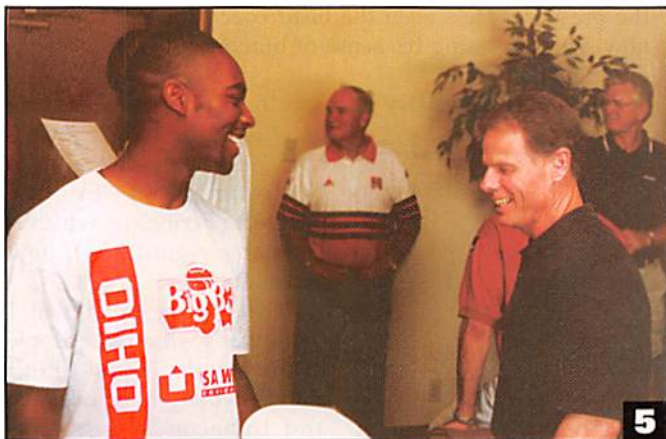
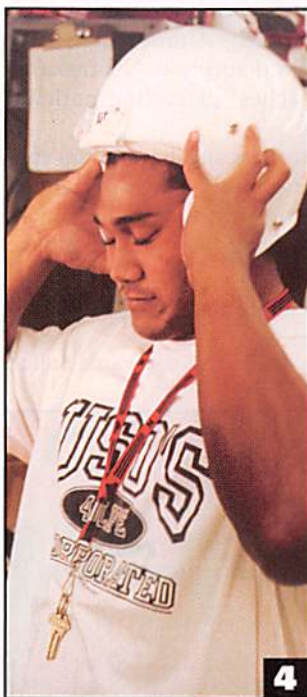
— Frank Solich





## FRESHMAN REPORT

Wilson Thomas (1) gets pumped. Assistant equipment manager Mike Mason gets Demoine Adams (2) ready for battle. Jon Bowling (3) receives his room assignment. Tony Tata (4) might need a bigger size. DeJuan Groce (5) and coach Frank Solich enjoy a few light moments before the work begins.



## Grixby's Status In Doubt

Freshman recruit **DeAntae Grixby** might not enroll as a full-time student until second semester as a result of reinjuring his left shoulder during Nebraska's Shrine Bowl high school all-star game in late July. Grixby rushed for 121 yards and two touchdowns to lead the South to a 28-14 victory in the game.

The 5-foot-8, 180-pound Grixby, an Omaha (Central) graduate who has been projected as either a running back or a defensive back, underwent arthroscopic surgery on the shoulder in early August and didn't report with the other scholarship recruits for freshman strength and conditioning tests. The shoulder injury occurred while he was in high school. He also underwent arthroscopic surgery last fall.

The South team defense was led by Cornhusker scholarship freshman **Chris Kelsay**, who was involved in eight tackles. Kelsay is the brother of Nebraska senior rush end **Chad Kelsay**.

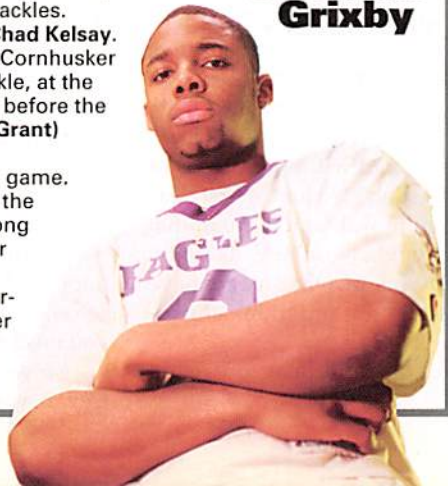
Chris, who also will play rush end, roomed with Cornhusker scholarship recruit **Jeremy Slechta**, a defensive tackle, at the Shrine Bowl training camp in Crete, Neb., the week before the game. "We want to be the next (Jason) Peter and (Grant) Wistrom," Slechta told the *Lincoln Journal Star*.

Slechta also was outstanding in the Shrine Bowl game.

Nebraska was well-represented on both sides in the annual game. Kelsay, Slechta and Grixby were among the South co-captains, as was **Jon Bowling**, another scholarship freshman.

The North co-captains included Nebraska scholarship freshman **Aaron Golliday** as well as Cornhusker walkons **Austin Forster**, **Troy Hassebroek** and **Kyle Ringenborg**. ■

## DeAntae Grixby



## Lots Of Walkons

As many as 41 walkons were expected to begin practice with the Nebraska football team on Aug. 24, the first day of fall semester classes. Prior to that, only 105 players were allowed to practice.

The walk-on class, the biggest in recent seasons, was to include two players who would be juniors this season — **Chris Moran** from Walkersville, Md., and **Seth Gutz** from Columbus, Neb.

Gutz is transferring from nearby Seward Concordia College.

The other walkons, including 11 from out of state, will be freshmen.

"The rules have made it hard to recruit walkons, but they are as important to our program as ever," coach **Frank Solich** said. The NCAA prohibits coaches from commenting about specific walk-on players until they have begun classes.

Even so, "I can tell you that this is a very good group," said Solich.

Chris Butler	IB
Joe Chrisman	QB
Danny Cork	SE/WB
Will Dabbert	TE
Chad Duryea	WR
Mason Dutton	LB
Kyle Eisenhauer	OL
Austin Forster	WB
Joe Freeman	OL
Gabe Fries	LB
Sam Gutz	QB
Seth Gutz	WB/SE
Andy Gwennap	OL
Troy Hassebroek	SE
Dan Hennings	WB/SE
Casey Hughes	FB
Richard Hughes	DL
Paul Kastl	FB
John Klem	SE
Scott Koethe	OL
David Kolowski	OL
Paul Kosch	DB
Adam Lechtenburg	DB
Jeremy Lyman	RE
Josh Lyman	SE
Stephen Manning	DL
Chris Moran	DB
Jeff Nelson	DL
Andrew Offner	DL
Tyler Rauenzahn	IB
Kyle Ringenborg	RE
Scott Shanle	LB
Leif Sidwell	OL
Jemond Smith	WLB
Luke Smith	LB
Aaron Terpening	DB
Tyrone Uhlir	FB
Justin Valencia	OL
Mike Wilford	OL
Colin Wills	RE
Steve Ziemba	OL



# Despite Changes, Huskers Remain Steady Under Solich

*Frank Solich has taken the torch that was passed to him from Tom Osborne and has successfully kept the fire burning in Lincoln*



**Mike  
BABCOCK**

NEBRASKA WAS THIRD in the ESPN/USA Today preseason poll, which was released in early August. The lofty ranking came as no surprise. Nebraska is, after all, the coaches' defending national champion.

But the Cornhuskers also have an inexperienced offensive line, an inexperienced quarterback and a first-year head coach. Any one of those things would normally be

cause for concern.

So being ranked that high by one's peers might be a bit generous.

"I was somewhat surprised," head coach Frank Solich said before the start of fall camp. "We probably do not have as many returning starters as what maybe a lot of the teams in the top 10 would have."

What Nebraska does have, however, is a winning tradition.

"The program has been tremendously successful," said Solich. "And I'm sure some of that (being ranked third) comes back to the success we've had in the past, which is fine."

"We would accept being ranked anywhere, to be honest with you."

That's not exactly true if the pronoun "we" includes the fans, who expect the Cornhuskers to be ranked among the nation's elite, even before college teams have strapped on the pads for fall practice. Their reasoning is simple: The rankings ought to reflect the respect of 36 seasons of excellence.

Solich now shoulders the burden of those 36 consecutive winning seasons. He is reminded of that tradition each time he walks through the South Stadium tunnel leading from the varsity locker room to Tom Osborne Field.

The walls of the tunnel are decorated with the records of every Cornhusker team since 1962, Bob Devaney's first year as head coach. "So it's pretty tough to walk out there to that practice field and not know exactly what you're walking by in terms of number of wins, in terms of what teams have done, what coaches have done here in this program," the 53-year-old Solich said.

"Without question, to a degree, it's a little bit of weight on a guy's shoulders."

To a degree? A little bit? Such qualifiers are characteristic of Solich's speech. They reflect his modesty. But they do not reflect the enormity of the task confronting him.

Devaney's record over 11 seasons was 101-20-2, a winning percentage of .829. Tom Osborne's record over 25 seasons was even better: 255-49-3, a winning percentage of .836. Nebraska won national championships in three of Osborne's last four seasons and its record was 60-3 over the last five.

There is no reason to think Solich won't be able to handle the pressure. He's been the head coach for eight months now, without losing his sense of humor and without withdrawing into a shell.

He remains readily accessible to reporters despite

increasing demands on his time. And he doesn't seem to be intimidated by the prospect of criticism, which is inevitable regardless of how successful he is.

"That's going to happen. I think that's what puts people in the stands. If you didn't allow anybody to be negative and to second-guess anything, we wouldn't have anybody show up at the games. And I want people at the games."

With Solich at the helm, there should be little reason for fans to second-guess and no reason to think Nebraska won't make yet another national championship run this season. "You can throw me out of the equation," Solich said. "But this staff and this group of players, I think, are maybe as well prepared as anybody to be able to continue this program's rich tradition."

The truth is that Solich is an integral element of the equation. He represents stability and continuity. He's a link to the past, yet his focus is the future.

His coaching philosophy has been shaped by Devaney, for whom he played, and by Osborne, for whom he was an assistant for 19 seasons. But there is no question that he'll put his signature on the program.

He won't be another Osborne any more than Osborne was another Devaney.

Solich's job is to maintain the status quo. But for that to happen, he has to keep the program moving ahead. In a sense, it's a contradiction in terms. "You focus on the things you need to focus on to move forward," he said.

Move forward. That's the carry over from Osborne and Devaney. That's the tradition. ■



After serving 19 years as an assistant to Tom Osborne, Frank Solich knows exactly what is expected of him and the Nebraska football program.



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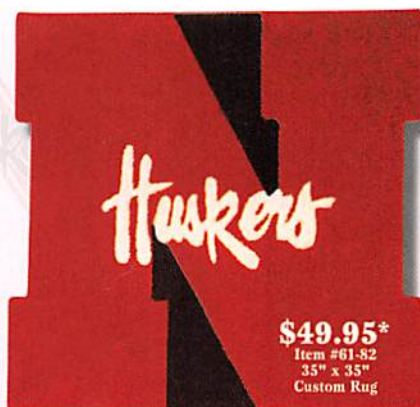
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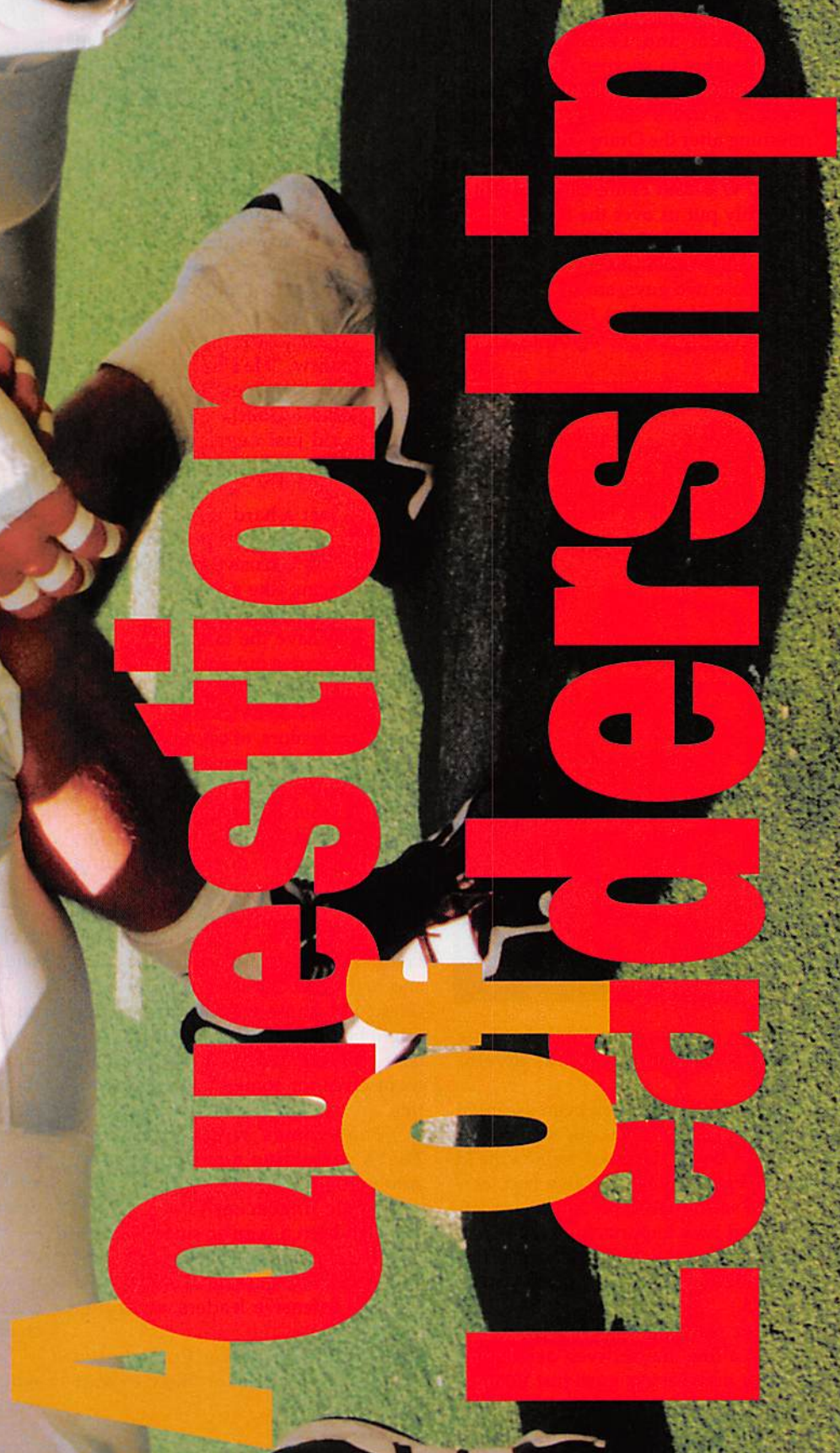
Grant Wistrom and Jason Peter led by example in 1997, driving their teammates, as well as themselves, through winter conditioning, spring practice and the summer and fall camps. They were relentless. But that was last year.

Who will fill that void this season?

By Mike Babcock







# A Question of Leadership



**T**he Nebraska football team's share of the national championship in 1997 was forged in the disappointment of 1996 and shaped by the return of Grant Wistrom and Jason Peter, both of whom could have bypassed their final season and submitted their names for the NFL draft.

Wistrom and Peter willed the Cornhuskers to succeed. Then-coach Tom Osborne acknowledged as much during a news conference on the morning after the Orange Bowl game.

"The fact that Jason Peter and Grant Wistrom came back, I think, probably put us over the hump, if not (by) their athletic skills, (by) their leadership," Osborne said.

"Those two guys, among some others, ramrodded that football team. They decided a year ago they were

come from self-motivation.

"It's got to come from individual effort. There are different ways to show leadership. Some guys have done it verbally. Other guys have done it strictly by their actions. We certainly have players who are capable of being great leaders, and some of those have already stepped forward."

Rush ends Mike Rucker and Chad Kelsay are among them, as are full-back Joel Makovicka and center Josh Heskew, both of whom were hampered by injuries in the spring.

Heskew was sidelined all of the spring with a back injury, but that didn't keep him from helping to rally the rebuilt offensive line in which he's the only returning starter.

"You've got to admire the kid. He's pretty inspirational," said junior offensive tackle Jason Schwab when asked about Heskew. "He's had it tough. He came here with a knee injury, and now he's out with the back.

"The kid just never gives up. He always has a smile on his face. He's never down.

"He's just a hard worker. Despite his injury, he's really brought us together. The offensive line has pretty much become like a family again. It really became unified over the winter. I think we have the talent, speed and strength to come out and be one of the Nebraska lines of old."

Heskew, Makovicka, Rucker and Kelsay are seniors, of course.

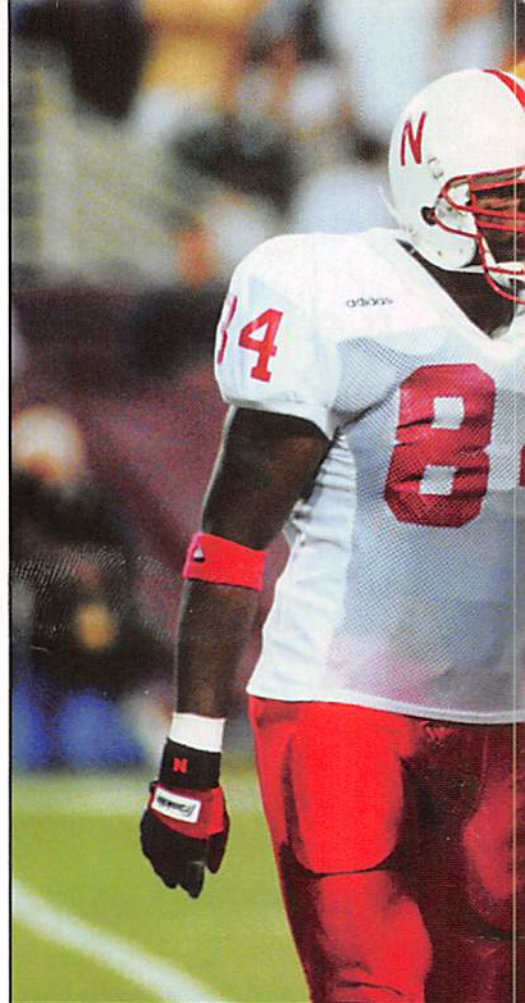
Although the responsibility is not theirs exclusively, "I think that's the tradition around here, the seniors stepping up," said Rucker. "I think it's just something that goes with being seniors, older guys.

"You know the ropes. You've been in the dogfights. You know what it takes. You've been there for the good and bad. You help the other guys who might not know what it takes. They might be tired, but you tell them, 'This isn't anything.' They've got to prepare themselves for something bigger than this.

"That comes with experience. That's something we seniors have. And we can pass it along."

Middle linebacker Jay Foreman, who has been a regular since he started at strongside linebacker as a red-shirt freshman, and tackle Jason Wiltz also are defensive leaders, according to Rucker.

Weakside linebacker Eric Johnson is the only other senior likely to start on defense.



**Seniors Mike Rucker (84) and Chad Kelsay (57) have already stepped forward, but Solich wants more players to follow their example by displaying leadership in actions and not by just doing a lot of talking.**



going to come back and get the thing done. Their leadership was invaluable."

Such leadership has been essential to Nebraska's recent success, a fact that has been addressed by new head coach Frank Solich. "We've had, certainly, some discussion about leadership and how important it is to a football team, and how important it has been over the last four or five years," he said.

"Our players understand that. But there's a fine line between developing leaders and having guys just doing a lot of talking. Certainly it's got to

Makovicka and Heskew are among those who have taken over for quarterback Scott Frost, guard Aaron Taylor and tight end Vershan Jackson as offensive leaders. Makovicka "has shown the ability to be a great leader, and certainly all the young quarterbacks have stepped forward," Solich said.

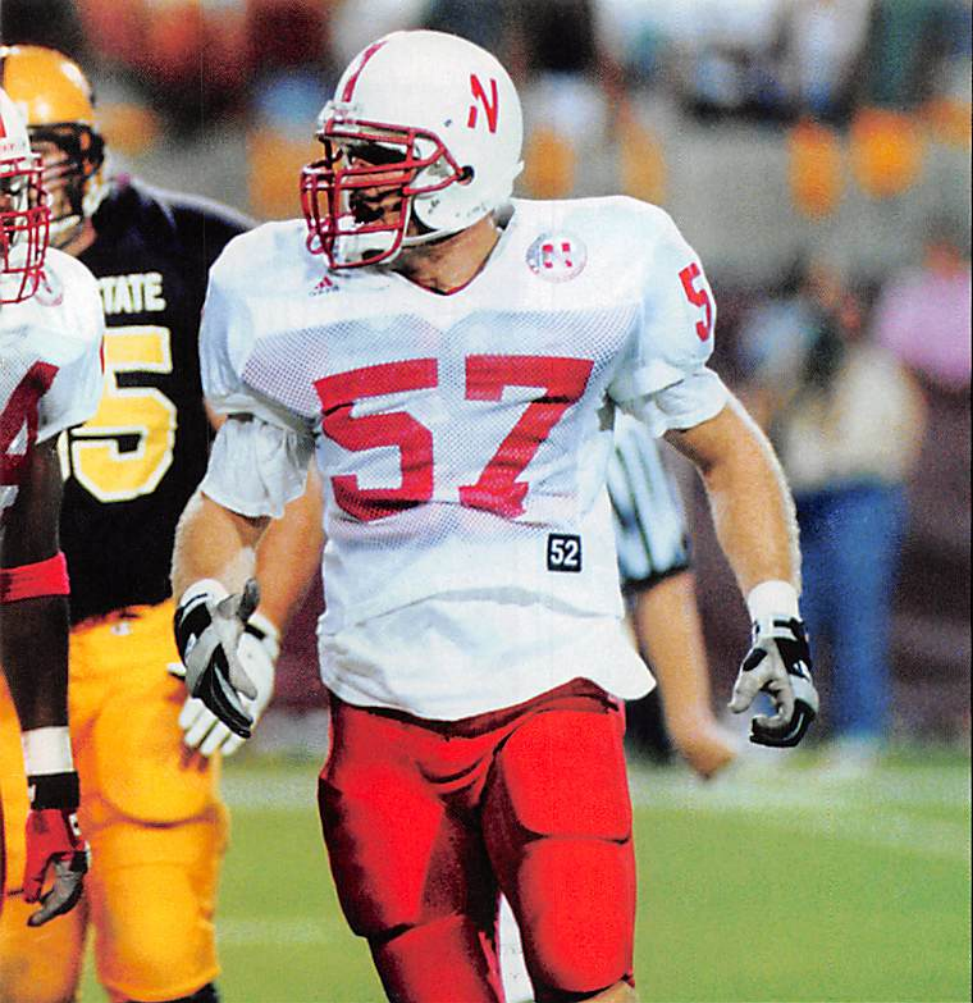
The nature of the position requires quarterbacks to be leaders.

Identifying team leaders was among the goals of spring practice, though the captains are traditionally elected during preseason practice in the fall. Success, however, also depends on each player taking responsibility for himself, no matter what his position is on the depth chart.

That appears to be a characteristic of Solich's first team. Most of the returning players spent very little time celebrating Nebraska's third national championship in four seasons.

"A lot of guys, you would think, would probably take a couple of weeks off to rest a little bit. But that's





Michael Chow

something that didn't happen," said Rucker. "A lot of people went home that week (after the Orange Bowl), but the next week there were a lot of people in the weight room, right off the bat.

"That's just a week and a half after your last game. Everybody's supposed to be resting. But we had people in there working out. That's what it's going to take to get another national championship. What we want to do is try to rack up as many as we can. We've got three under our belts, the seniors."

The only other program to have won three national championships in four seasons is Notre Dame, which was *The Associated Press* national champion in 1946, 1947 and 1949.

No program has ever won four national titles over five seasons.

"We're trying to get four," Rucker said. "Not too many teams are going to do this back-to-back stuff and have these opportunities, these chances. Thank the Lord we have that chance."

Nebraska is among only six teams to have won back-to-back national championships and one of only three that have won consecutive national titles more than once. The other schools are Oklahoma (1955-56, 1974-

75) and Alabama, the only program to do it three times (1964-65, 1973-74, 1978-79).

Minnesota (1940-41), Texas (1969-70) and Notre Dame (1946-47) are the other teams to have won back-to-back national championships since the AP rankings were established in 1936.

The coaches' poll, now sponsored by ESPN/USA Today, began in 1950.

As was apparent last season, winning a national championship is out of a team's control to some degree. With the Pac-10 and Big Ten joining in a Super Alliance, less will be left to chance.

Nevertheless, the Cornhuskers must concern themselves with those things they can control.

"I don't think there's any question they're focused on being a great football team," Solich said. "You can tell by the effort that went into winter conditioning, (by) the fact that very few guys missed a workout the entire winter program."

"They're zeroed in right now on being a great football team. So I've been pleased with the effort and the amount of leadership and determination by our players."

Yes, there's that word again, "leadership." ■

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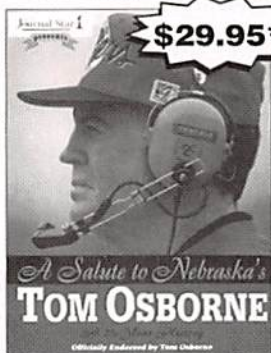
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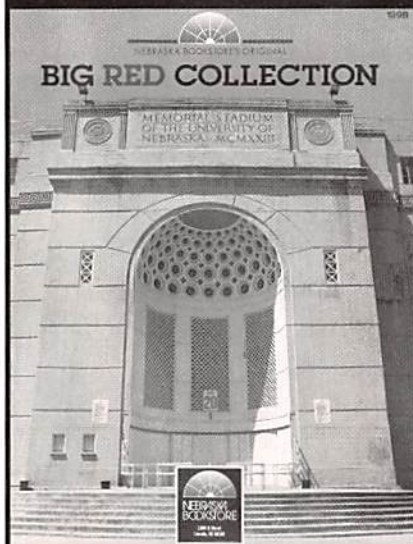
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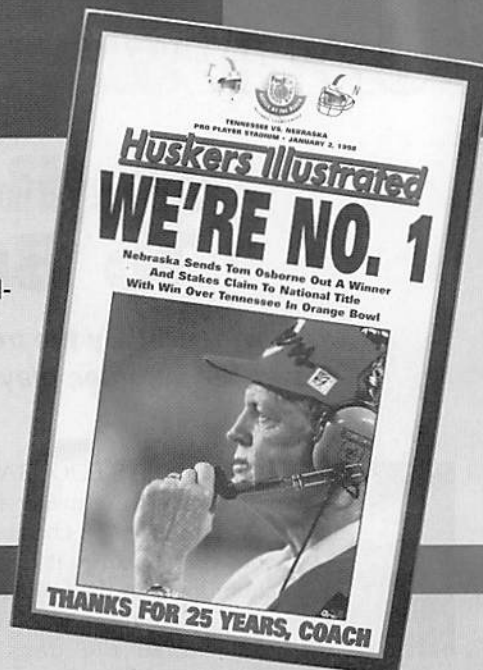
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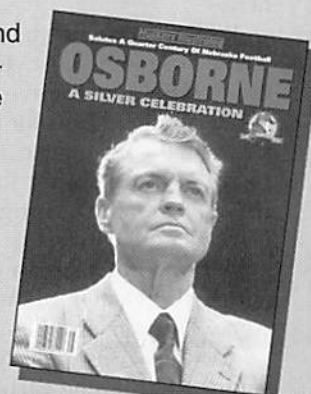
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## Big Red Fever Ready To Break In Lincoln

*As evidenced by the more than 100 Husker players who remained in Lincoln over the summer, playing football at Nebraska is a year-round commitment*



**Bill DOLEMAN**

IT'S ALWAYS FOOTBALL season when you're in a Cornhusker state of mind. But when the calendar changes from July to the start of fall camp, it almost feels like the countdown to the holidays has begun. It's kind of like the anticipation an eight-year-old has in the days leading up to Christmas morning.

In this case, it's the thought of opening kickoffs and gatherings of 75,000. Some enterprising songwriter should pen the lyrics to a seasonal carol that starts: "On the first day of Nebraska football, my true love gave to me..." We're talking gold record here.

While no one may be dreaming of a white Christmas just yet, visions of Big Red Saturdays have been dancing in people's heads for a long time. Oh sure, there were the annual fixes, recruiting and spring football. But this is the real thing, and the Nebraska football family has already gotten one gift with an extra home game, the earlier-than-scheduled Aug. 29 start against Louisiana Tech.

The consensus in Lincoln over the summer is that the early game will be of great benefit because if there's one thing the defending national champions need, it's experience. However, when you talk about Nebraska's need for experience, it's a relative thing. It's no secret there will be new faces on the offensive and defensive lines, a new starting quarterback and, oh yes, a new head coach. But each year there are veteran players ready to take their turn and wide-eyed newcomers who see nothing but stars.

Of utmost importance, however, is a coaching staff grounded in principles that have guided the program for nearly 40 years. Sure, there's been a change at the top. But that doesn't mean Nebraska has to start at the bottom. The preseason polls are a testament to that. Tradition counts in college football, and the character and the reputation of the men who maintain it matters a great deal.

You'd be hard-pressed to find someone associated with Nebraska football in some way who hasn't been asked: "How good do you think they'll be this year?" My best answer has always been: "Fine." I guess maybe as in "fine-tuning." There's no need for a major overhaul of the Big Red

machine.

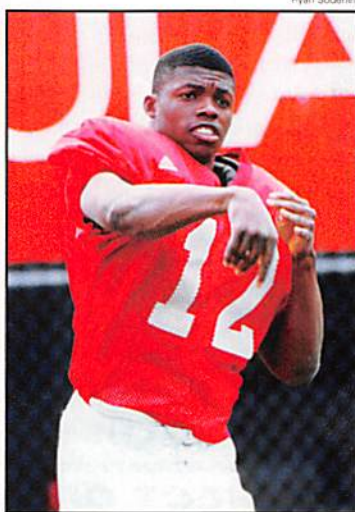
At least that's the impression I got this summer. Watching the 100-plus Huskers who were in Lincoln for conditioning and the player-organized passing league was refreshing and reassuring. At a time when they could be doing other things during the summer, there they were four times a week, pushing each other to the limit and policing themselves for those rare occasions when effort was lacking. Unity and team chemistry are as important as talent and team speed, and what is done in the offseason is as key as what takes place on the field in the fall.

The first time I witnessed the summer program up close was in 1994. Six months had passed since Florida State defeated Nebraska, 18-16, in the Orange Bowl, crushing the Huskers' national title hopes. I'll never forget the leadership Christian Peter, Aaron Graham and others showed in preparing for the "Unfinished Business" campaign. I also remember watching a story on West Virginia, Nebraska's opponent in the season-opening Kickoff Classic. One of the Mountaineer players said on air how impressed he was that 40 of his teammates had stayed at school and worked out over the summer together. I told Boyd Epley, Director of Athletic Performance for the Huskers, what I had heard and he jokingly told me that "we had 40 guys absent one night." I doubt that has ever happened or ever will happen at Nebraska.

There's too much pride in the players and in the program to allow it. What they were doing out there in 100-plus degree heat mattered, and it paid off. Six months later, back in the Orange Bowl game, they tore through Miami with two fourth-quarter touchdowns en route to the championship.

Six months later, a mix of old and new faces was back at it again. Six months later, the Cornhuskers demolished Florida in the Fiesta Bowl. Eleven wins followed in 1996, followed by another run for No. 1 in 1997. It's more than a routine. It's a commitment, or a dedication to excellence as the university describes it, that has racked up 60 victories and three national championships in five years.

If the effort that was on display this summer is any indication of what is ahead for the Big Red in the coming months, then Husker fans have every reason to look forward to a very happy New Year beginning Aug. 29. 'Tis the season, after all. ■



Ryan Soderlin

**Like most of his Husker teammates, Bobby Newcombe spent the summer in Lincoln to prepare for another run at the national title.**

*Bill Doleman's face is familiar to Cornhusker fans. He is host for several Nebraska-related television programs including the "Husker Show" and coaches' shows for Terry Pettit, Paul Sanderford and Frank Solich.*



# There's More To The Big 12 Race Than Meets The Eye

*While much of the preseason hype has centered on the Nov. 14 contest between the Huskers and Wildcats, there is still much to be said before then*



**Curt McKEEVER**

IF YOU BELIEVE all the hype, then it's going to be a long three months before we get down to the business of Nebraska vs. Kansas State.

The Nov. 14 game is undoubtedly the most anticipated contest in the Big 12 this season, and if it doesn't settle who's king of the league's North division, a lot of people are in for a huge letdown.

Heck, you might be able to include Kansas coach Terry Allen in that group.

"Can I pick two?" Allen said at the Big 12 media gathering in Dallas when asked what team he favors to win the North. "No, I'm a big believer in the system that's been established at the University of Nebraska, and I think that Nebraska is the favorite. But if it's going to happen, with the job that Bill's done and the senior experience they have at Kansas State this year, this is the year it's going to get done."

Granted, on paper Frank Solich's Cornhuskers and Bill Snyder's Wildcats look like they're the class of the league, but it's still premature for anyone to make reservations for the Big 12 Championship game in St. Louis, let alone the Fiesta Bowl.

Take this scenario, for instance:

Colorado beats Kansas State. Kansas State beats Nebraska. Nebraska beats Colorado. Now, who goes on to play the South division champ?

Although Kansas State had a breakthrough year in 1997, the Wildcats will have their hands full in Boulder, Colo., where they haven't beaten the Buffs since 1973 and own just two wins in 25 games.

Meanwhile, Nebraska has a new coach, a new quarterback, a new offensive line and a flashy I-back trying to return from a year-long injury. Grant Wistrom, Jason Peter, Scott Frost and Ahman Green have gone on to the NFL, and all the mysteries about the Huskers may give Kansas State the belief that it can win this one for the first time since 1968.

Then again, we might find that Nebraska is too talented to be prevented from playing in a national championship game for the fifth time in six seasons.

But unlike in past years, Nebraska might not be favored to win every game. That alone makes this season intriguing. Beyond that, there appears to be a few other squads that are good enough to beat the Cornhuskers on the right day.

NU should get tested by Louisiana Tech and Washington

even before it opens league play against the two best teams from the South, Oklahoma State and Texas A&M.

Louisiana Tech has one of the nation's top quarterback-receiver tandems in Tim Rattay and Troy Edwards, while Washington quarterback Brock Huard is capable of lighting up any defense.

The fact that Oklahoma State gave up a home game to play Nebraska at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Mo., tells me the Cowboys don't think they can win regardless of where the game is held. But none of the Cornhuskers have ever experienced the kind of setting that awaits them at A&M's Kyle Field. If the Aggies aren't still awestruck from

last year's 54-15 loss to NU in the Big 12 title game, the Oct. 10 contest may go to the wire.

At the end of the season, Nebraska must face Kansas State and Colorado.

Last season, long after the Wildcats had lost to NU 56-26 in early October, they whined that it was too bad they couldn't have met later in the season. This year, there won't be any excuses.

Lurking in the background is Colorado, a program that many have written off after a 5-6 season. To do so would be a mistake.

The Buffs are young, but if they find an answer at quarterback, they have the firepower to rocket right back to the top. Remember, they lost to the Cornhuskers by five and three points, respectively, the last two seasons.

And if the preseason media poll is correct, NU traded the three worst teams in the South — Baylor, Oklahoma and Texas Tech — for the three best — A&M, Oklahoma State and Texas.

Missouri and Texas both travel to Lincoln, but the Tigers and Longhorns each have a player — Corby Jones and Ricky Williams, respectively — who can make defensive coordinator Charlie McBride break out in a big sweat.

In short, it seems the Cornhuskers will have little to take for granted in 1998. The best thing about that is it should help us all get past the hype that's already started about a certain game in mid-November. ■



**Both DeAngelo Evans and Frank Solich will have a significant role in regards to Nebraska's Big 12 and national title hopes this season.**

*Curt McKeever is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.*



# 1998 ALPHABETICAL ROSTER

# NUMERICAL ROSTER

No.	Player (Letters Earned)	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Class	Hometown (High School/College)
98	Adams, Demoiné	RE	6-3	220	Fr.	Pine Bluff, Ark. (Pine Bluff)
17	Aguglia, Scott	SE	6-1	200	Fr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
38	Alexander, Dan*	IB	6-0	250	So.	Wentzville, Mo.
89	Almanzar, Luis	NT	6-3	285	So.	Jersey City, N.J. (Dickinson)
64	Altstadt, Steve	OG	6-4	275	Fr.	Fort Calhoun, Neb.
28	Anderson, Josh*	RCB	5-8	180	So.	Wahoo, Neb.
82	Applegate, Sean*	WB	5-9	190	Jr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Lincoln High)
41	Baker, Rod	WLB	6-0	225	So.	Hastings, Neb. (Adams Central)
51	Baldwin, Matt	C	6-1	290	Jr.	Arvada, Colo. (Bear Creek)
33	Becvarovski, Sasho	TE	6-4	250	So.	Crown Point, Ind. (Lake Central)
20	Beveridge, Tom	SE	6-0	190	So.	Sutherland, Neb.
4	Boettner, Mic	ROV	6-0	200	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Millard North)
14	Booker, Dion	FS	6-1	205	Fr.	Oceanside, Calif. (El Camino)
84	Bowling, Jon	TE	6-4	215	Fr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
35	Brown, Kris***	PK	5-10	205	Sr.	Southlake, Texas (Carroll)
33	Brown, Josh	K	6-1	175	Fr.	Foyil, Okla.
14	Brown, Lance***	WB	5-11	190	Sr.	Papillion, Neb. (Papillion-LaVista)
21	Brown, Mike**	ROV	5-10	205	Jr.	Scottsdale, Ariz. (Saguaro)
22	Brown II, Ralph**	RCB	5-9	180	Jr.	Hacienda Heights, Calif. (Bishop Amat)
36	Buckhalter, Correll*	IB	6-0	225	So.	Collins, Miss.
39	Buettgenback, Ben**	MLB	5-11	210	Jr.	Hastings, Neb.
48	Burrow, Jamie	MLB	6-1	230	Fr.	Ames, Iowa
	Butler, Chris	IB	6-0	190	Fr.	Hoover, Ala.
6	Cheatham, Kenny***	SE	6-4	210	Sr.	Phoenix, Ariz. (South Mountain)
	Chrisman, Joe	QB	6-1	200	Fr.	Longmont, Colo.
9	Christo, Monte**	QB	6-0	195	Sr.	Kearney, Neb.
31	Cielocha, Chris	FB	5-11	215	Fr.	Columbus, Neb. (Columbus Scotus)
55	Clanton, Jon	DL	6-2	280	Fr.	Glendale, Ariz. (Centennial)
68	Clausen, Jeff**	OT	6-6	305	Jr.	Dixon, Ill.
58	Cody, Wes	OL	6-3	255	Fr.	Fremont, Neb. (Bergan)
	Cork, Danny	SE/WB	5-10	200	Fr.	Owasso, Okla.
	Cornelson, Ben	REC	5-11	170	Fr.	Shawnee, Kan. (Shawnee Mission NW)
52	Coyne, Jon	MLB	6-4	220	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Omaha Westside)
3	Craver, Keyuo	DB	6-0	180	Fr.	Harleton, Texas
7	Crouch, Eric	QB	6-0	200	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Millard North)
	Dabbert, Will	TE	6-4	220	Fr.	Lincoln, Neb. (East)
3	Davison, Matt*	SE	6-0	180	So.	Tecumseh, Neb.
85	DeBates, T.J.**	TE	6-3	250	Jr.	Stewartville, Minn.
2	Demps, Mike	DB	5-11	190	Fr.	Fort Worth, Texas (Dunbar)
31	Diedrick, Dahrran	IB	6-0	210	Fr.	Scarborough, Ontario, Canada
76	Diekmann, Billy	OT	6-4	285	So.	Cheney, Neb. (Norris)
	Duryea, Chad	SE	6-5	200	Fr.	Merna, Neb. (Anselmo-Merna)
	Dutton, Mason	LB	6-0	220	Fr.	Plano, Texas
33	Ebke, Mitch	FS	6-1	200	So.	Fairbury, Neb.
	Eisenhauer, Kyle	OL	6-2	250	Fr.	Wausa, Neb. (Bloomfield)
4	Evans, DeAngelo*	IB	5-9	210	So.	Wichita, Kan. (Collegiate)
2	Finister, Demond*	WB	5-10	180	So.	New Orleans, La. (Boys Town, Neb.)
19	Finley, Clint*	FS	5-11	200	So.	Cuero, Texas
83	Fischer, Craig*	SE	6-0	180	Jr.	Leigh, Neb.
38	Fischer, Eric	ROV	5-11	190	So.	Leigh, Neb.
44	Foreman, Jay***	MLB	6-1	240	Sr.	Eden Prairie, Minn.
	Forster, Austin	WB	5-9	185	Fr.	Gordon, Neb.
	Freeman, Joe	OL	6-4	270	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Millard North)
	Fries, Gabe	LB	6-2	200	Fr.	Benkelman, Neb. (Dundy County)
29	Friesen, Pat	SE	6-0	185	Fr.	Henderson, Neb.
43	Fröhlich, Russell	SLB	6-0	220	Sr.	Omaha, Neb. (Bellevue East)
30	Fujan, Paul	WB	5-11	180	Fr.	Wahoo, Neb. (Neumann)
74	Fulton, Lonnie	OT	6-5	250	So.	Grand Island, Neb.
72	Gessford, Ben*	OG	6-2	290	Sr.	Lincoln, Neb. (East)
8	Gibson, John	WB	5-11	180	So.	Papillion, Neb. (Papillion-LaVista)
7	Gill, Bobby	NT	6-0	275	So.	Lincoln, Neb. (Northeast)
99	Golliday, Aaron	TE	6-4	235	Fr.	York, Neb.
46	Gragert, Nick	FB	6-1	220	Fr.	Columbus, Neb.
74	Green, Mike	OT	6-4	290	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Westside)
	Grixby, DeAntae	RB/DB	5-8	180	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Central)
5	Groce, DeJuan	DB	5-11	185	Fr.	Garfield Heights, Ohio (St. Edward)
97	Grummert, Matt	LR	6-2	240	So.	Fairbury, Neb.
53	Gustafson, Chris	SLB	6-2	220	Fr.	Gallup, N.M.
	Gutz, Sam	QB	5-11	170	Fr.	Columbus, Neb.
	Gutz, Seth	WB/SE	6-0	185	Jr.	Columbus, Neb.
	Gwennap, Andy	OL	6-2	265	Fr.	Smith Center, Kan.
80	Haafke, Billy**	SE	5-11	190	Sr.	South Sioux City, Neb.
17	Hadenfeldt, Dan	PK	5-11	200	Jr.	Des Moines, Iowa (Valley)
45	Hamik, Brad	FS	6-0	180	So.	Hawarden, Iowa (West Sioux)
	Hassebroek, Troy	SE	6-4	200	Fr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Lincoln High)
78	Havlovic, Aaron	C	6-3	280	Jr.	Oceola, Neb. (David City Aquinas)
18	Hemje, Jeff	LCB	6-0	185	Fr.	Grand Island, Neb.
	Hennings, Dan	WB/SE	6-0	175	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Westside)
59	Heskew, Josh***	C	6-3	290	Sr.	Mustang, Okla.
55	Hochstein, Russ*	OG	6-3	280	So.	Hartington, Neb. (Cedar Catholic)
49	Hogrefe, Quint**	SLB	5-11	210	Sr.	Auburn, Neb.
	Hughes, Casey	FB	6-1	210	Fr.	Scotia, Neb. (North Louth-Scotia)
	Hughes, Richard	DL	6-5	330	Fr.	Winchester, Ky.
24	Ickes, Matt	RCB	5-10	200	Fr.	Page, Neb. (Orchard)
50	Jackson, Julius**	WLB	6-0	235	Jr.	Gainesville, Texas
88	Jackson, Sheldon***	TE	6-4	245	Sr.	Diamond Bar, Calif. (Damien)
27	Johnson, Eric**	WLB	6-1	205	Jr.	Phoenix, Ariz. (Alhambra)
69	Julch, Adam**	OT	6-5	315	Jr.	Omaha, Neb. (Burke)
91	Kaiser, Loran*	DT	6-5	280	So.	Farwell, Neb. (St. Paul)
	Kastl, Paul	FB	5-10	205	Fr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Pius X)
57	Kelsay, Chad***	LR	6-3	250	Sr.	Auburn, Neb.
34	Kelsay, Chris	RE	6-5	240	Fr.	Auburn, Neb.
22	Kingston, Ben*	FB	6-1	240	Jr.	Omaha, Neb. (Westside)
	Klem, John	SE	6-3	185	Fr.	Lincoln, Neb. (East)
	Koethe, Scott	OL	6-5	290	Fr.	Central City, Neb.
47	Kohl, Josh**	WLB	6-1	220	Jr.	Hastings, Neb.

No.	Letters	Player	Pos.
1	**	Johnson, Eric	WLB
1	**	London, Frankie	WB
2	*	Finister, Demond	WB
2	*	Demps, Mike	DB
3	*	Davison, Matt	SE
3	*	Craver, Keyuo	DB
4	*	Evans, DeAngelo	IB
4	*	Boettner, Mic	ROV
5	**	Wiggins, Shevin	WB
5	*	Groce, DeJuan	DB
6	***	Cheatham, Kenny	SE
7	*	Crouch, Eric	QB
8	*	Morro, Brian	P
8	*	Gibson, John	SE
8	*	Thomas, Wilson	WR
9	**	Christo, Monte	QB
9	*	Reynolds, Khari	LCB
10	*	Quindt, Brandon	ROV
11	**	Peterson, Jerome	RCB
12	*	Newcombe, Bobby	QB
#12	*	Turner, Arion	RCB
13	*	Polk, Carlos	MLB
14	***	Brown, Lance	WB
14	*	Booker, Dion	FS
15	*	Miller, Willie	FB
16	*	Swiney, Erwin	LCB
16	*	Runty, Jay	QB
17	*	Hadenfeldt, Dan	PK
17	*	Tack, Chuck	PK/P
17	*	Aguglia, Scott	SE
18	*	Hemje, Jeff	LCB
19	*	Finley, Clint	FS
20	*	Beveridge, Tom	SE
20	*	Woodward, Wes	LCB
21	**	Brown, Mike	ROV
22	**	Brown II, Ralph	RCB
22	*	Kingston, Ben	FB
23	***	Laffeur, Bill	P
23	*	Raymond, Steve	SLB
24	*	Ickes, Matt	RCB
24	*	Tillery, Alik	IB
25	*	Walker, Joe	ROV
26	*	Vedral, Mark	WLB
26	*	Vanderhoef, Casey	WB
27	*	McGraw, Greg	FS
27	*	Johnson, Eric	WLB
28	*	Anderson, Josh	RCB
28	*	Long, Chace	PK
29	**	List, Gregg	ROV
29	*	Friesen, Pat	SE
30	*	Fujan, Paul	WB
31	*	Diedrick, Dahrran	IB
31	*	Cielocha, Chris	FB
32	*	Soucie, Travis	IB
32	*	Uhlir, Tyrone	FS
33	*	Ebke, Mitch	FS
33	*	Becvarovski, Sasho	TE
33/34	*	Brown, Josh	K
34	*	Roth, Brandon	MLB
34	*	White, Dan	IB
34	*	Kelsay, Chris	IB
35	***	Brown, Kris	PK
35	*	McGann, Shawn	WB
36	*	Buckhalter, Correll	IB
37	**	Ortiz, Tony	SLB
37	*	Piening, Hank	FB
38	*	Alexander, Dan	IB
38	*	Fischer, Eric	ROV
39	**	Buettgenback, Ben	MLB
40	***	Legate, Billy	FB
41	*	Baker, Rod	WLB
42	*	Penny, Jon	MLB
42	*	Watchorn, Troy	FS
43	*	Murphy, John	TE
43	*	Fröhlich, Russell	SLB
44	***	Foreman, Jay	MLB
45	***	Makovicka, Joel	FB
45	*	Hamik, Brad	FS
46	**	Shaw, Brian	SLB
46	*	Gragert, Nick	FB
47	**	Kohl, Josh	WLB
48	*	Stanislav, Jeremy	FB
48	*	Burrow, Jamie	MLB
48	***	Tuttle, Chad	MLB
49	**	Hogrefe, Quint	SLB
50	**	Jackson, Julius	WLB
51	*	Baldwin, Matt	C
52	*	Coyne, Jon	MLB
53	*	Gustafson, Chris	SLB
54	*	Raiola, Dominic	C
54	*	Shook, Matt	OL
55	*	Hochstein, Russ	OG



## NUMERICAL ROSTER

No.	Letters	Player	Pos.
55		Cianton, Jon	DL
57	***	Kelsay, Chad	LR
58		Volk, Dave	OT
58		Cody, Wes	OL
59	***	Heskew, Josh	C
61	***	Wade, Brandt	OG
63	**	Sherman, James	OG
64		Altstadt, Steve	OG
65	*	Schwab, Jason	OT
66		Rutherford, Jon	OG
67		Kolterman, Nate	OL
68	**	Clausen, Jeff	OT
69	**	Julch, Adam	OT
70		McGinn, Matt	DT
70		Lohr, Jason	DL
71		Smith, Justin	RE
72	*	Gessford, Ben	OG
73		Tansey, Jim	OT
74		Green, Mike	OT
74		Fulton, Lonnie	OT
75		Kollmorgen, Kyle	OT
76		Diekmann, Billy	OT
77		Gill, Bobby	NT
78		Havlovic, Aaron	C
79		Saalfeld, Chris	OG
80	**	Haafke, Billy	SE
80		Ryan, Eric	LR
81	**	Wills, Aaron	RR
82	*	Applegate, Sean	WB
83	*	Vanden Bosch, Kyle	LR
83	*	Fischer, Craig	SE
84	***	Rucker, Mike	RR
84		Bowling, Jon	TE
85	**	DeBates, T.J.	TE
87		McKee, Jake	TE
88	***	Jackson, Sheldon	TE
89		Almanzar, Luis	NT
90		Wistrom, Tracey	TE
90		Nelson, Casey	DT
90		Tata, Tony	LB
91	*	Kaiser, Loran	DT
92	***	Toline, Travis	RR
93		Mooberry, Brandon	LR
94		Wardyn, Brandon	RR
94		Slechta, Jeremy	RR
95		Wichmann, J.P.	RR
96	**	Warren, Steve	NT
97		Grummert, Matt	LR
98		Siebenborn, Scott	RR
98		Adams, Demoine	RE
99	**	Wiltz, Jason	DT
99		Golliday, Aaron	TE

## PRONOUNCIATION GUIDE

Demoine Adams . . . . . Deh-MOINE  
 Sasho Becvarovski. . . Beck-va-ROSS-ski  
 Ben Buettenback . . . BOO-tin-back  
 Keyuo Craver . . . . . KEY-oh  
 Dahrran Diedrick . . . . . DARE-ren  
 Russell Froehlich . . . . . FROE-lick  
 Nick Gragert . . . . . GRAY-gert  
 DeJuan Groce . . . Duh-Wan GROSS  
 Billy Haafke . . . . . HALF-key  
 Russ Hochstein . . . . . HOKE-stine  
 Quint Hogrefe . . . . . HOE-grafe  
 Loran Kaiser . . . . . KYE-ser  
 Billy Lafleur . . . . . Luh-FLUER  
 Billy Legate . . . . . Leh-GATE  
 Joel Makovicka . . Mack-oh-VICK-uh  
 Dominic Raiola . . . . . Rye-OH-luh  
 Khari Reynolds . . . . . CAR-ee  
 Jeremy Slechta . . . . . Seh-LECHT-tuh  
 Erwin Swiney . . . . . SWEE-nee  
 Travis Toline . . . . . Toe-Leen

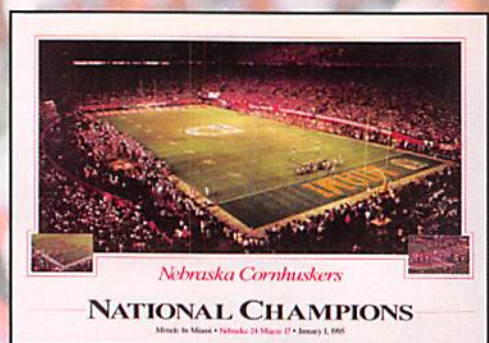
## 1998 ALPHABETICAL ROSTER

No.	Player (Letters Earned)	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Class	Hometown (High School/College)
75	Kollmorgen, Kyle	OT	6-4	290	Fr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
	Kolowski, David	OL	6-5	265	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Millard West)
67	Kolterman, Nate	OL	6-3	300	Fr.	Seward, Neb.
	Kosch, Paul	DB	5-11	180	Fr.	Humphrey, Neb. (St. Francis)
23	Lafleur, Bill***	P	5-11	200	Sr.	Norfolk, Neb. (Norfolk Catholic)
	Lechtenberg, Adam	DB	5-10	175	Fr.	Butte, Neb.
40	Legate, Billy***	FB	5-11	230	Sr.	Clearwater, Neb.
29	List, Gregg**	ROV	6-0	220	Jr.	Valentine, Neb.
70	Lohr, Jason	DL	6-3	275	Fr.	Tulsa, Okla. (Jenks)
1	London, Frankie**	WB/DB	6-0	180	Jr.	Lake Charles, La. (LaGrange)
28	Long, Chace	PK	6-0	200	So.	Wahoo, Neb.
	Lyman, Jeremy	RE	6-3	200	Fr.	Salt Lake City, Utah (Skyline)
	Lyman, Josh	SE	6-1	185	Fr.	Salt Lake City, Utah (Skyline)
45	Makovicka, Joel***	FB	5-11	240	Sr.	Brainard, Neb. (East Butler)
	Manning, Stephen	DL	6-1	270	Fr.	Knoxville, Tenn. (Bearden)
35	McGann, Shawn	WB	5-11	190	Fr.	Granger, Ind. (Penn)
70	McGinn, Matt	DT	6-2	270	Fr.	Anselmo, Neb. (Anselmo-Merna)
27	McGraw, Greg	FS	5-8	200	Jr.	Millville, N.J.
87	McKee, Jake	TE	6-1	230	So.	Goodland, Kan.
32	Mehl, Levi	SLB	6-0	195	Fr.	Crete, Neb.
15	Miller, Willie*	FB	6-0	230	So.	Omaha, Neb. (Bellevue West)
93	Mooberry, Brandon	LR	6-5	245	So.	Lexington, Neb.
	Moran, Chris	DB	5-10	180	Jr.	Walkersville, Md. (Linganore)
8	Morro, Brian	P	5-9	180	Sr.	Middletown, N.J. (South)
43	Murphy, John	TE	6-3	235	So.	Crawford, Neb.
90	Nelson, Casey	DT	6-2	250	Fr.	Newman Grove, Neb.
	Nelson, Jeff	DL	6-7	260	Fr.	Superior, Neb.
12	Newcombe, Bobby*	QB	6-0	195	So.	Albuquerque, N.M. (Highland)
	Offner, Andrew	DL	6-4	260	Fr.	Red Cloud, Neb.
37	Ortiz, Tony**	SLB	6-0	215	Jr.	Waterbury, Conn. (Crosby)
42	Penny, Jon	MLB	6-1	225	Fr.	Lawrence, Kan.
11	Peterson, Jerome**	RCB	5-7	185	Jr.	Port Allen, La.
37	Piening, Hank	FB	6-2	215	So.	Lincoln, Neb. (Milford)
13	Polk, Carlos*	MLB	6-3	245	So.	Rockford, Ill. (Guilford)
10	Quindt, Brandon*	ROV	6-0	200	So.	Scottsbluff, Neb.
54	Raiola, Dominic	C	6-2	300	Fr.	Honolulu, Hawaii (St. Louis)
	Rauenzahn, Tyler	IB	5-10	190	Fr.	Colorado Springs, Colo. (Rampart)
23	Raymond, Steve	SLB	6-0	215	Jr.	Gering, Neb.
9	Reynolds, Khari*	LCB	5-10	185	So.	Mays Landing, N.J. (Egg Harbor)
	Ringenberg, Kyle	RE	6-4	220	Fr.	Elkhorn, Neb.
34	Roth, Brandon	MLB	6-3	240	Fr.	Milford, Neb.
84	Rucker, Mike***	RR	6-6	250	Sr.	St. Joseph, Mo. (Benton)
16	Runty, Jay	QB	6-0	195	So.	Elkhorn, Neb.
66	Rutherford, Jon	OG	6-3	290	Fr.	Midwest City, Okla.
80	Ryan, Eric	LR	6-1	235	Jr.	Overton, Neb.
79	Saalfeld, Chris	OG	6-2	280	So.	North Bend, Neb.
65	Schwab, Jason*	OT	6-1	300	Jr.	Eagan, Minn. (Cretin-Derham Hall)
	Shanle, Scott	LB	6-2	220	Fr.	St. Edward, Neb.
46	Shaw, Brian**	SLB	6-1	215	Jr.	Deweese, Neb. (Sandy Creek)
63	Sherman, James**	OG	6-2	295	Jr.	LaVerne, Calif. (Whittier)
54	Shook, Matt	OL	6-3	285	Fr.	Medina, Ohio
	Sidwell, Leif	OL	6-5	270	Fr.	Kearney, Neb.
98	Siebenborn, Scott	RR	6-4	235	So.	Columbus, Neb.
94	Slechta, Jeremy	DL	6-5	255	Fr.	LaVista, Neb. (Papillion-LaVista)
	Smith, Jemond	WLB	6-0	190	Fr.	Kenner, La. (Bonnabel)
71	Smith, Justin	RE	6-5	240	Fr.	Sherman, Texas
	Smith, Luke	LB	6-1	225	Fr.	York, Neb.
32	Soucie, Travis	IB	5-11	200	So.	Hastings, Neb. (St. Cecilia)
48	Stanislav, Jeremy	FB	6-0	215	So.	Prague, Neb.
	Stella, Randy	LB	6-2	200	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Benson)
16	Swiney, Erwin*	LCB	6-0	185	So.	Lincoln, Neb. (Northeast)
17	Tack, Chuck	PK/P	6-6	210	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Millard South)
73	Tansey, Jim	OT	6-2	310	Jr.	Cranford, N.J.
90	Tata, Tony	LB	6-2	240	Fr.	Honolulu, Hawaii (St. Louis)
	Terpening, Aaron	DB	5-11	175	Fr.	North Salem, Ore.
8	Thomas, Wilson	WR	6-5	200	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (North)
24	Tillery, Alik	IB	5-11	205	Fr.	Brussels, Belgium (Shape American)
92	Toline, Travis***	RR	6-3	245	Sr.	Wahoo, Neb.
12	Turner, Arion	RCB	5-10	170	Fr.	Los Angeles, Calif. (Dorsey)
48	Tuttle, Chad	MLB	6-0	220	So.	Wahoo, Neb. (Omaha North)
32	Uhlir, Tyrone	FB	6-0	210	Fr.	Battle Creek, Neb.
	Valencia, Justin	OL	6-5	270	Fr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Pius X)
83	Vanden Bosch, Kyle*	LR	6-4	260	So.	Larchwood, Iowa (W. Lyon Comm.)
26	Vanderhoef, Casey	WB	5-10	190	So.	Alpine, Utah
26	Vedral, Mark	WLB	5-11	210	Fr.	Gregory, S.D.
58	Volk, Dave	OT	6-4	280	Fr.	Battle Creek, Neb.
61	Wade, Brandt***	OG	6-2	300	Sr.	Springfield, Neb. (Platteview)
25	Walker, Joe*	ROV	5-10	200	So.	Arlington, Texas (Lamar)
94	Wardyn, Brandon	RR	6-3	240	So.	Farwell, Neb. (St. Paul)
96	Warren, Steve**	NT	6-1	305	Jr.	Springfield, Mo. (Kickapoo)
42	Watchorn, Troy	FS	5-11	190	So.	Columbus, Neb.
34	White, Dan	IB	5-9	195	Fr.	Green Bay, Wis. (Ashwaubenon)
95	Wichmann, J.P.	RR	6-4	220	Fr.	Shawnee, Kan. (Shawnee Mission NW)
5	Wiggins, Shevin**	WB	5-11	200	Sr.	Palmetto, Fla. (Manatee)
	Wilford, Mike	OL	6-4	270	Fr.	Stevensville, Mich. (Lakeshore)
81	Wills, Aaron**	RR	6-2	250	Jr.	Omaha, Neb. (Burke)
	Wills, Colin	RE	6-2	230	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Burke)
99	Wiltz, Jason**	DT	6-4	310	Sr.	New Orleans, La. (St. Augustine)
90	Wistrom, Tracey	TE	6-4	215	Fr.	Webb City, Mo.
20	Woodward, Wes	LCB	5-8	185	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Creighton Prep)
	Ziemba, Steve	OL	6-5	300	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Burke)

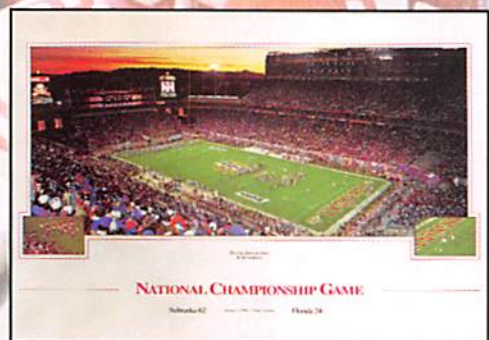


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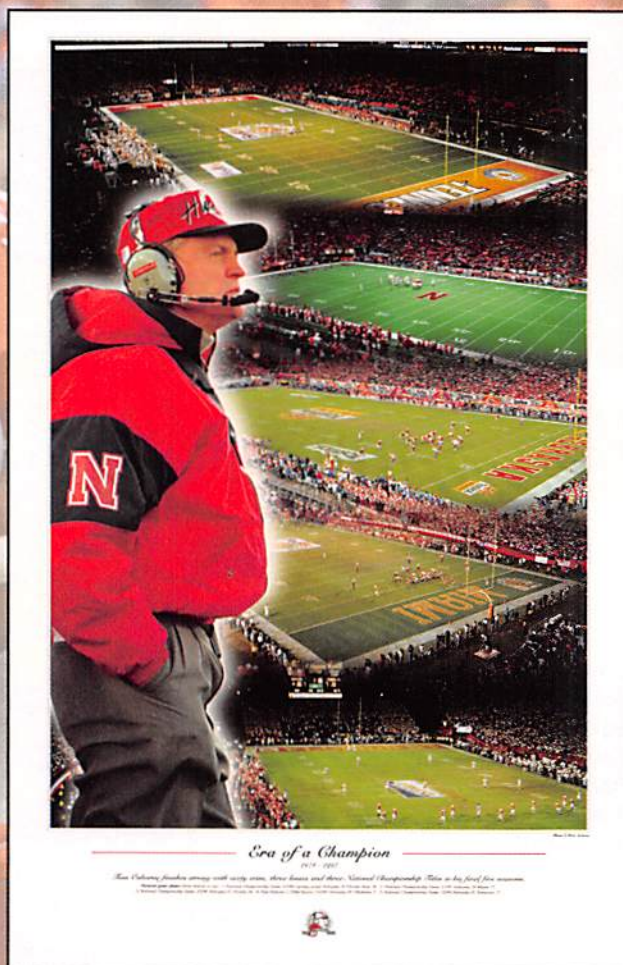
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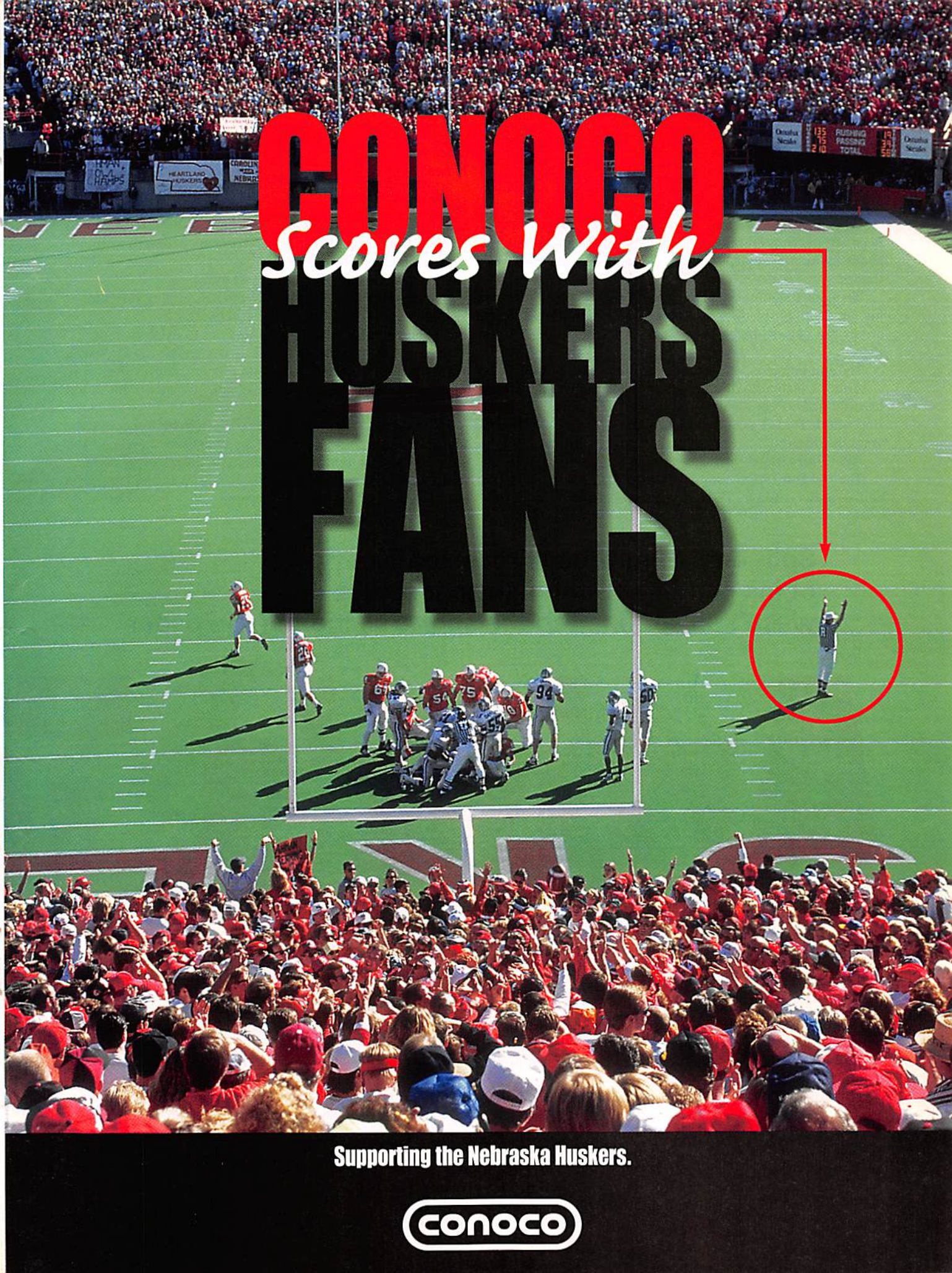
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THE TATTOO ON JOHN GIBSON'S right shoulder says "Gibby." It was the first.

Nebraska's sophomore split end has added four more, with varying degrees of originality and complexity. The one on his left shoulder is of the two theater masks.

He borrowed the basic design, but the "expressions are mine," he said. One mask represents "my serious side." And the other? Well, "everybody's got a little bit of a devil in them."

Gibson smiles. The morning is pleasant. Two-a-day practices are nearing an end. And he obviously enjoys talking about the tattoos, which have significance beyond their aesthetics.

He is part Seminole Indian, so he has a feather tattoo on his left shoulder blade. The feather's colors are those which are in the flag of Aruba because his father's family is from there.

The sun tattoo on his stomach "has tribal implications."

And the elaborate dragon tattoo on his thigh . . . actually, he intended to get a snake tattoo that day, "but I couldn't find one I liked. I saw the dragon, and it was like: 'Hey, I want the dragon.'"

After four tattoos, one has a right to some whimsy.

The dragon tattoo took two-and-a-half hours over the course of two sittings. The tattoo artist spent 45 minutes out-

"I had seen it done, but that was the first time I had ever done one," he said.

His hand shook a little until he touched the skin. Then he had control. "It's more a feel for the skin," said Gibson. "The weight (of the tattoo machine) is distributed pretty good. Once you get the hang of it, it just glides along. It's not overly heavy. But you've got to have strong hands."

Gibson's hands are strong from catching passes, although he has caught only two in the last two seasons. He sat out as a redshirt his first season at Nebraska and then was forced to the sideline by a torn anterior cruciate ligament suffered during practice after the first game last season after catching two passes in the opener against Akron.

He also suited up for the 1996 opener, hoping his number would be called.

"I had a goal," he said. "I wanted not to redshirt."

He had the physical skills to play right away. He was a three-time Nebraska Class A state champion in the triple jump at Papillion-LaVista High School, evidence of his speed and quickness.

He was a good enough defensive back in high school to be chosen as the *Lincoln Journal Star* Defensive Player of the Year as a senior. But he also caught 36 passes for 838 yards, and when he wasn't catching passes, he was blocking for a running back who gained 1,800 yards.

**Split end John Gibson received plenty of ink coming out of high school, but it wasn't all confined to the sports section of the paper**

# Artist's To

lining the dragon and the rest of the time filling it in. "Actually, I fell asleep," Gibson said.

He got the dragon tattoo in April of 1997 during spring practice. It was sore for the better part of two weeks. "I knew if I had been popped there once, it would have been pretty painful," he said.

The sun on his stomach was painful without being popped. He left the shop "bent over."

Gibson discusses the tattoos with an understanding first achieved while he worked at a Lincoln tattoo and body piercing shop during the summer of 1997. He was an apprentice of sorts and started the outline work on two tattoos, a Tweety Bird and a skull and crossbones with dice underneath.

Even though he went to high school in Nebraska, Gibson didn't grow up a Cornhusker fan. His family moved around because his father was in the military. He was born in New York, and he lived in Alabama, California (twice) and Virginia before his family finally settled in the Omaha area. "To tell you the truth, I didn't know anything about Nebraska football until I was in high school," he said.

Given a choice, he would have remained in Virginia. "I love Virginia," he said.

His affection for Virginia is, in part, a result of the memories of watching his uncle, Mark May, play for the NFL's Washington Redskins. May "lived maybe 30 minutes from us," said Gibson.

May, who played collegiately at Pittsburgh, didn't





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attempt to persuade his nephew to attend a particular school. However, "he gave me a lot of advice when I was being recruited," said Gibson. "He told me to ask a lot of questions. And if I had any questions (later), I should always call them back and ask."

He got his first letter from Nebraska when he was a high school junior, which is when he attended his first game at Memorial Stadium. He went with a senior teammate on a recruiting visit.

The experience didn't seem to make much of an impression on either.

His own recruiting visit a year later made more of an impression. He went in with an open mind and left with it closed. "This was the first school I visited," he said. "So I used it as the standard. 'Is this school's program better than Nebraska's? Is this school better academically than Nebraska?' I couldn't find any schools that had both. Nebraska was pretty much No. 1 as far as academic support, athletic facilities and coaching staff." Plus, he wasn't put off by Nebraska's emphasis on blocking.

Gibson was prepared to handle the complexities of the Cornhusker offense. Papillion-LaVista coach Gene Suhr taught a sophisticated offense. "The playbook would probably be twice as thick as the one here," Gibson said. "And as far as the receivers went, he got a lot of blocking techniques from Coach (Ron) Brown. The blocking schemes were basically the same. So it wasn't foreign to me."

"Some things came quickly because I kind of recognized them from my high school stuff."

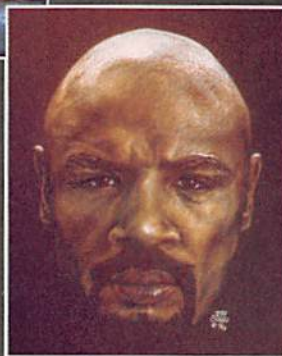
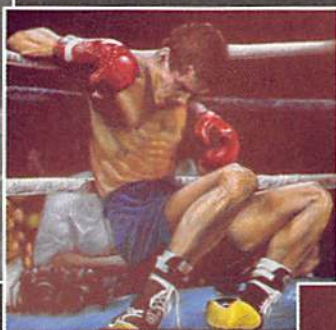
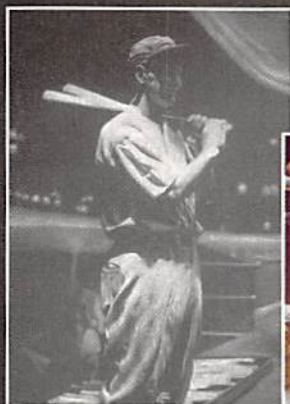
Last spring, Gibson was moved from wingback to split end. He went into fall camp third, behind Kenny Cheatham and Matt Davison. He has come back from the injury with the tenacity represented by his dragon tattoo. He "will join that crowd and very much add to it," coach Frank Solich said.

Creating a tattoo is like playing wide receiver, in that precision is important, as is eye-hand coordination. "Some tattooists don't do a real good job of getting it into your skin," Gibson said.

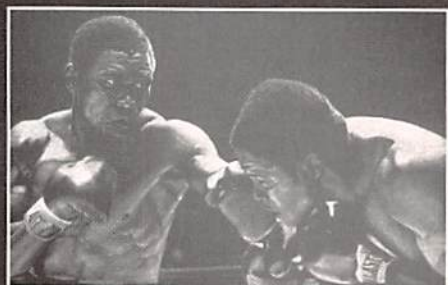
Properly done, a tattoo can be a work of art.

"Gibby" should know. He's had first-hand knowledge on both sides of the needle. ■

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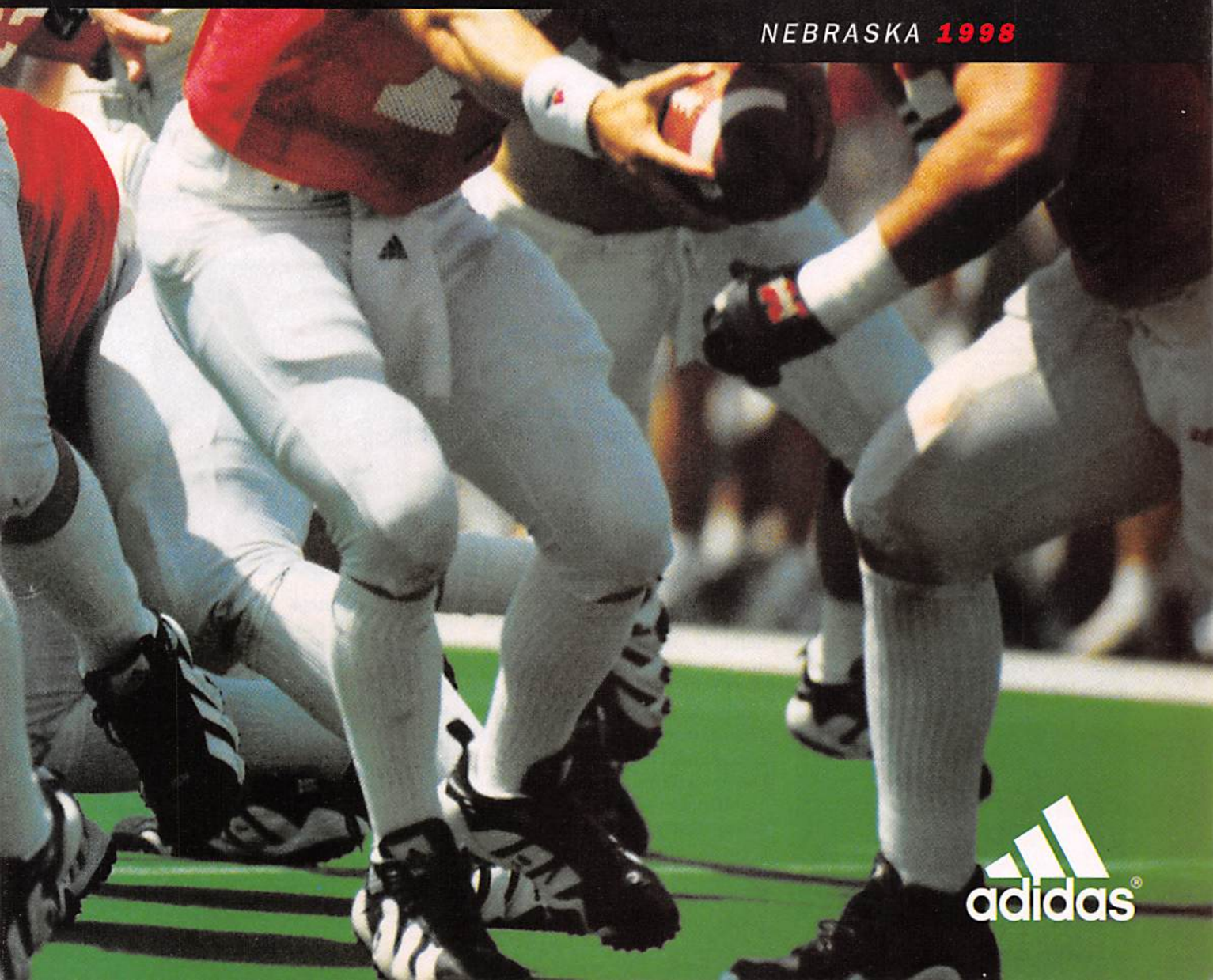
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# Tech's Rattay No Passing Fancy

*Husker secondary will be challenged early and often by Bulldogs' explosive aerial attack*

By Mark DEROWITSCH

**H**ey, Louisiana Tech. Do you think you're ready for the big time?

OK, so that statement might be overdoing it a little bit. After all, Louisiana Tech played and defeated Alabama on the road last season en route to a 9-2 record. The Bulldogs also defeated California a year ago and lost to Auburn and Arkansas.

Louisiana Tech finished just outside of the top 25, finishing the season at No. 29 in the final ESPN/USA Today coaches' poll and No. 30 in the

Associated Press poll.

But when Louisiana Tech enters Memorial Stadium to help christen Tom Osborne Field and face Nebraska in the Eddie Robinson Classic in a nationally televised game, it will be a literal sign of mobility for the NCAA Division I-A independent Bulldogs. Kickoff has been pushed back to 3 p.m. to accommodate the broadcast on Fox Sports Net.

Since making the move to Division I-A prior to the 1989 season, the Bulldogs have a record of 50-46-3. Louisiana Tech's 9-2 finish a year ago was the team's best since 1991.

Third-year Louisiana Tech coach Gary Crowton is anxious to see how his young Bulldogs respond in a hostile environment against the defending co-national champions.

"I'm excited to have a team playing them," Crowton said. "It shows we've made some moves to get invited to play."

Crowton, whose name was mentioned in connection with job openings at Arkansas and Louisville after last season, is a graduate of Brigham Young and got his start in coaching as a student assistant under pass-happy Cougar coach LaVell Edwards. It is no wonder that a year ago, Louisiana Tech rang up nearly 500 yards of total offense and scored over 33 points. The Bulldogs also scored 40 or more points in a game five times last season.

The ignitor of the offensive fireworks display is junior quarterback Tim Rattay, who is being billed in Louisiana Tech's media guide as a Heisman Trophy candidate, and his numbers last season back up that lofty claim. Rattay set or tied 28 school records and led the nation in total offense in his first season as the Bulldogs' starter. He threw for 3,881 yards and 34 touchdowns and was

LOUISIANA TECH  
(0-0)

@

NEBRASKA  
(0-0)



Tim RATTAY



Joel MAKOVICKA

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picked off just 10 times in 477 attempts. Rattay's touchdown total was the second-highest output by a sophomore in NCAA history.

Even more impressively, Rattay engineered five second-half comebacks last season, with his best performance coming in a 510-yard outing against Central Michigan. His worst outing came in a 17-16 win against Northeast Louisiana in which he threw for just

## Tentative 2 Deeps

### NEBRASKA OFFENSE

SE	6	Kenny Cheatham***	6-4	210	Sr.
	3	Matt Davison*	6-0	180	So.
LT	69	Adam Julch**	6-5	315	Jr.
	57	Dave Volk	6-4	280	Fr.
LG	63	James Sherman**	6-2	295	Jr.
	61	Brandt Wade***	6-2	300	Sr.
C	59	Josh Heskew***	6-3	290	Sr.
	54	Dominic Raiola	6-2	300	Fr.
RG	72	Ben Gessford*	6-2	290	Sr.
	55	Russ Hochstein*	6-3	280	So.
RT	65	Jason Schwab*	6-1	300	Jr.
-or-	68	Jeff Clausen**	6-6	305	Jr.
TE	88	Sheldon Jackson***	6-4	245	Sr.
	85	T.J. DeBates**	6-3	250	Jr.
QB	12	Bobby Newcombe*	6-0	195	So.
	7	Eric Crouch	6-0	190	Fr.
FB	45	Joel Makovicka***	5-11	235	Sr.
	40	Billy Legate**	5-11	230	Sr.
IB	4	DeAngelo Evans*	5-9	210	So.
-or-	36	Correll Buckhalter*	6-0	225	So.
WB	14	Lance Brown***	5-11	190	Sr.
	5	Shevin Wiggins**	5-11	200	Sr.
PK	14	Kris Brown***	5-10	205	Sr.

### NEBRASKA DEFENSE

LR	57	Chad Kelsay***	6-3	250	Sr.
	83	Kyle Vanden Bosch*	6-4	260	So.
NT	96	Steve Warren**	6-1	305	Jr.
	77	Bobby Gill	6-0	275	So.
DT	99	Jason Wiltz**	6-4	310	Sr.
	91	Loran Kaiser*	6-5	28-	So.
RR	84	Mike Rucker***	6-6	250	Sr.
	92	Travis Tolline***	6-3	245	Sr.
SLB	46	Brian Shaw**	6-1	215	Jr.
-or-	37	Tony Ortiz	6-0	215	Jr.
MLB	44	Jay Foreman***	6-1	240	Sr.
	13	Carlos Polk*	6-3	245	So.
WLB	1	Eric Johnson**	6-1	205	Sr.
	50	Julius Jackson**	6-0	235	Jr.
LCB	16	Erwin Swiney*	6-0	185	So.
	9	Khari Reynolds*	5-10	185	So.
FS	19	Clint Finley*	5-11	200	So.
	14	Dion Booker	6-1	205	Fr.
ROV	21	Mike Brown**	5-10	205	Jr.
	25	Joe Walker*	5-10	200	So.
RCB	22	Ralph Brown**	5-9	180	Jr.
	11	Jerome Peterson**	5-7	185	Jr.
P	23	Bill Lafleur***	5-11	200	Sr.

## Tentative 2 Deeps

### LOUISIANA TECH DEFENSE

DE	59	Desmond Nunnery**	6-3	255	Jr.
	5	Rodney Lloyd***	6-3	265	Sr.
NT	94	Otis Pitts**	6-1	285	Sr.
	96	Chris Willis**	6-3	265	Jr.
DT	99	Jerome King*	6-4	270	Jr.
	98	Mickey Clark*	6-3	240	So.
WILL	93	Jarrett Procell**	6-3	275	Jr.
	44	Michael Boone	6-2	235	So.
ZIP	53	Quincy Stewart*	6-1	215	So.
	1	Derrick Parker***	6-0	228	Sr.
MIKE	51	Damon Harrington**	6-1	225	Jr.
	42	Adrian Fredericks***	5-11	228	Sr.
SAM	25	Selu Alofipo*	6-1	240	Sr.
	49	Brian Bradford*	6-0	210	Jr.
CB	30	Roderick Pernetter*	5-11	180	So.
	4	Daniel Willis*	6-1	180	Sr.
CB	19	Marlon Ford***	6-0	185	Sr.
	27	Frederick Lewis*	5-10	175	Jr.
FS	29	Dewey Simpson*	5-10	180	Jr.
-or-	3	Larry Wright**	6-0	185	Sr.
ROV	6	Charles Bowman*	5-11	180	Sr.
	43	Bobby Gray	6-1	205	Fr.
P	85	David Newman*	6-7	255	So.

### LOUISIANA TECH OFFENSE

ZR	15	Cedric Williams***	5-11	195	Sr.
	81	Sean Cangelosi*	6-4	200	So.
TE	87	Trey McIntosh*	6-7	230	Jr.
	85	David Newman*	6-7	255	So.
QT	66	Joey Chustz**	6-7	310	Jr.
	52	Max Landry*	6-6	285	So.
QG	68	Josh Yankowski*	6-3	285	Sr.
	75	Shannon Babineaux	6-3	300	Fr.
C	61	David St. Marie	6-3	295	Jr.
	78	Selby Brown	6-4	285	Jr.
SG	65	Rob Koontz**	6-4	280	Jr.
	79	Randy Richard	6-5	300	Fr.
ST	77	Robert Skapura	6-6	301	Jr.
	73	Logan Hulet	6-6	285	Fr.
QB	13	Tim Rattay*	6-1	200	Jr.
	10	Wesley Pate	6-3	220	Fr.
	7	Eric Crouch	6-0	190	Fr.
FB	20	Terence Wilson***	5-10	228	Sr.
	32	Terry Pratt*	6-0	222	Sr.
TB	22	Bobby Ray Tell**	5-6	200	Jr.
-or-	8	John Simon	5-10	190	Fr.
PK	28	Kevin Pond	5-10	185	Jr.



269 yards — a paltry sum by Rattay standards.

Don't think Rattay's record-setting season isn't a big deal because it was done at Louisiana Tech, a small school located in Ruston, La., that is known more for its women's basketball team and just recently joined big-time college football. Tech has also produced Terry Bradshaw, who played for the Bulldogs from 1966 until 1969 before joining the Pittsburgh Steelers and leading them to four Super Bowl titles. At Tech, Bradshaw had seven career 300-plus yard passing games. Rattay has already registered nine in his first 11 games.

"We know what we have with Tim," Crowton said. "He's proven himself to be tough, eager to learn and able to lead."

Helping Rattay with Tech's passing game is wide receiver Troy Edwards, who caught 102 passes for 1,707 yards and scored 13 touchdowns last season. Edwards led the nation in receiving yards per game and all-purpose yards last season, and he was the first write-in candidate to become a finalist for the Biletnikoff Award, which is given to the nation's top collegiate receiver.

When Rattay and Edwards are on their game, no school — or NCAA — record is safe.

But Edwards is just one of many weapons that Rattay uses. Seven wide receivers combined for nearly 3,000 yards a year ago, and six are back to help the Bulldogs offense.

The Bulldogs have a solid running game to complement their explosive aerial attack. Bobby Ray Tell and Jason Armstrong combined to rush for more than 1,000 yards last season. Tell, who

stands just 5-foot-6, was the workhouse out of the backfield, gaining 800 yards and picking up an impressive 6.8 yards per carry.

Protecting Rattay and opening holes for Tell may not be so easy this season. Like Nebraska, Louisiana Tech must deal with an offensive line that will be revamped this fall since four starters from last season are gone. The lone returning starter is tackle Joey Chustz. Chustz is one of three returning linemen who saw action last season.

It would be understandable for Crowton to be concerned, but the progress the Bulldogs made during the spring alleviated any worry he had about the line.

"Our offensive line may have been somewhat of a question mark heading into the spring, but we know with the guys we have coming in our line will be an offensive weapon once again," Crowton said.

Against Nebraska, Tech might be in for a long day defensively. A year ago, Tech gave up nearly 400 yards of total offense per game, and seven starters return from that unit. In addition, Tech hasn't seen an all-out option assault like Nebraska is likely to show.

The Bulldogs were decent against the run last season, allowing 3.8 yards per carry. They will be hard-pressed, however, to come anywhere close to that number against the Huskers.

With Bobby Newcombe making his debut as Nebraska's starting quarterback, it is unlikely that he will be asked to throw very often. When he does, Louisiana Tech will be ready. Despite the loss of safety John Noel, who ranked second nationally with seven interceptions a

year ago, the Bulldogs return three starters in the secondary.

Crowton spent a great deal of time this summer trying to learn all he could about the Huskers and their powerful offense. He knows that stopping it is no easy task.

"We'll see if we can handle Newcombe and all those other people I've read about," he remarked. "I guess we know what we're getting into."

While Crowton and his players may not be

# TALE OF THE TAPE

## Who Has The Edge?

### QUARTERBACKS

The running of Bobby Newcombe vs. the strong arm of Tim Rattay. Newcombe's debut as the Husker starter could be upstaged by a big passing day from the experienced Rattay.



### RUNNING BACKS

Welcome back, DeAngelo Evans. The speedster is running in top gear again and could have a big day in his return. Louisiana Tech hasn't had a 1,000-yard runner since 1994 and probably won't anytime soon.



### RECEIVERS

Six of Louisiana Tech's top seven return from last season, including Biletnikoff candidate Troy Edwards. Nebraska has experience, too. With Tech's reliance on the passing game, they have made receiver a priority.



### OFFENSIVE LINE

New faces, same results for the Cornhuskers. Look for big holes in Louisiana Tech offensive front. This is a pretty even matchup on paper, but a healthy Josh Heskew gives the Huskers the edge.



### DEFENSIVE LINE

Mike Rucker and Jason Wiltz replace Grant Wistrom and Jason Peter, both first-round NFL draft choices. Nebraska's still loaded while the Bulldogs have a pair of solid linemen in Otis Pitts and Jerome King.



### LINEBACKERS

Jay Foreman appears ready to step up, and the Huskers have always been strong in this area. Louisiana Tech lost two starters from last season and don't come close to the athleticism of the Husker backers.



### SECONDARY

Three players return from last year, but the Huskers will limp into the opener. Injuries to cornerback Erwin Swiney and free safety Clint Brown could leave Nebraska vulnerable. The Bulldogs lost just one starter.



### SPECIAL TEAMS

Nebraska kicker Kris Brown is automatic and the Huskers' return teams are always among the nation's best. Louisiana Tech will be playing with a new kicker and punter, so watch for the Huskers to bring pressure.



WR TROY EDWARDS

VS

CB ERWIN SWINEY

## KEY MATCHUP

Swiney missed the entire spring because of a pulled groin, and the injury is still bothering him. During the first week of two-a-days, Swiney practiced just once and sat out the first major scrimmage of the fall. Still, Swiney proved himself to be a valuable member of the Huskers last season when he took over the starting job early in his freshman season.

He faces maybe the toughest test of his career against Edwards. Last season, Edwards caught a team-high 102 passes for 1,707 yards and 13 touchdowns. He'll be QB Tim Rattay's favorite target this season and a definite Biletnikoff Award possibility. Edwards caught at least six passes in every game last season. He has excellent speed and runs very precise patterns.

Swiney will find out right away how effective he'll be this season. If Swiney can't play because of the injury, the chore of shutting down Edwards will likely fall to Khari Reynolds, a sophomore, or true freshman Keyuo Craver, who has spent time working with the Huskers' first team this fall. ■



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certain exactly what they're getting themselves into, they are certainly up for the challenge. Louisiana Tech is a scrappy team that won't back away from a fight. The Bulldogs didn't even have to play Nebraska. In fact, the Bulldogs could have turned down an offer to face the Cornhuskers — who have pounded their last five opening-day opponents by a combined score of 285-63 — but decided to use the game as a benchmark.

There will be other benchmark games this season for Louisiana Tech, too. In addition to playing Nebraska, the Bulldogs will go against Texas A&M, which lost to the Huskers in the Big 12 championship game last fall, and will get a rematch with Auburn after losing to the Tigers, 49-13, a year ago.

Crowton has done an excellent job of upgrading Louisiana Tech's schedule, while at the same time returning a serious measure of respectability to the program.

The game against Nebraska fits perfectly into Louisiana Tech's long-range plans, according to Crowton. The Bulldogs are trying to make a name for themselves as a Division I-A independent, and turning down contests with the cream of the crop wouldn't make any sense.

"We've played in big stadiums with the big crowds and we've done well," Crowton said. "It gets people in the program and those behind the program pretty excited about football."

Nebraska realizes what it's getting into as well.

The Huskers voted unanimously to accept the invitation to the Eddie Robinson Football Classic, which is named after the former Grambling coaching legend and all-time winningest coach in NCAA history.

Louisiana Tech's 9-2 record in 1997 impressed Nebraska and its coaching staff. In addition to their victories over Alabama and California, the Bulldogs posted solid wins against Alabama-Birmingham, Bowling Green, Southwestern Louisiana and Arkansas State.

First-year Nebraska head coach Frank Solich is excited about the opportunity to play in the Eddie Robinson Classic.

"It is very prestigious to host a game named for a great football coach and outstanding person like Eddie Robinson," Solich said. "Our players are excited about playing a very good opponent in Louisiana Tech." ■



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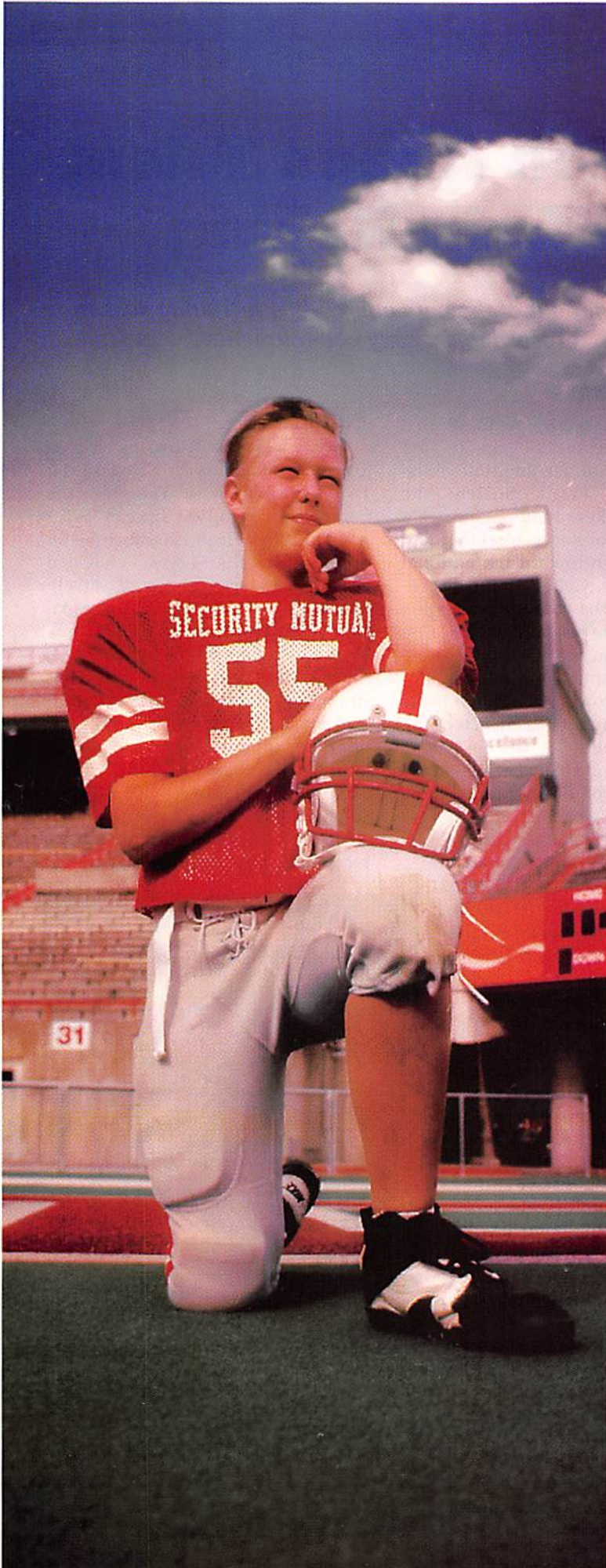
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Another Big Year For The Big 12?

## RUMORS

Early commitments have been in vogue in college football recruiting for the past three or four years and once again, the Big 12 is playing a big role in securing verbals from some of the top high school talent in the country.

New Texas coach **Mack Brown** has wasted little time getting used to the Southern heat as his school leads the way in the conference with 11 verbal commitments, with three of those coming from top 20 Texas talent. Offensive lineman **Robbie Doane** of Coppell, wide receiver **Artie Ellis** of Spring (Westfield) and athlete **Ivan Williams** of Cleveland are all preseason All-America selections.

Nebraska is next with six, including preseason All-America **Josh Davis** of Loveland, Colo. Four of the top 10 players in the state of Nebraska have already committed to the Huskers.

The Sooners are off to a solid start with two outstanding commitments, while Missouri and Iowa State both have one.

Florida has landed one of the top passing quarterbacks in the country in **Rex Grossman** of Bloomington (South), Ind., while **Chris Simms**, a lefty from Franklin Lakes (Ramapo), N.J., is looking at Penn State, Miami, Florida State and Notre Dame. Simms is the son of former New York Giant great and current NFL broadcaster **Phil Simms**.

There is still a Manning in college football and he is a good one. **Eli Manning** will follow in the footsteps of **Peyton** and their legendary father, **Archie**. Eli, who is ranked as the top quarterback in Louisiana, has Tennessee on his list, but seems to be keeping an open mind about recruiting. Count on LSU and Ole Miss to be in the hunt.

Ohio State has jumped out early with a number of early commitments including quarterback **Craig Krenzel** of Utica (Ford), Mich., running back **Kelton Lindsey** of Lebanon, Ohio (one of the very best in the country), defensive lineman **Tim Anderson** of Clyde, Ohio (one of the top five players in Ohio), defensive backs **Curtis Crosby** of Columbus (Eastmoor), Ohio, and **Mike Doss** of Canton (McKinley), Ohio.

Ever since **John Cooper** took over at Ohio State, it seems he's been able to get the majority of his class to commit early, and this year is no exception.

Michigan State is another school that is off to an early start with seven commitments while Notre Dame has four and USC has six verbals already in the bag. ■

# Solich Keeps Talent Train Rolling

*Huskers get out of the gate quickly this recruiting season, receiving six early commitments*

By James HALE

Some skeptics might say that as Nebraska begins its first year under longtime assistant **Frank Solich**, the Huskers may encounter a few obstacles blocking their annual sojourn toward the national championship. College football programs across the country are hoping the Huskers slip just a little this season so that they can help their own ascension to the summit of the polls.

We will know soon enough if the coaching change has affected the Huskers on the field. The bet here is that nothing will change at all and the Big Red will roll once again towards another shot at a national title.

However, we can already gain an accurate assessment that the coaching change hasn't changed Nebraska's awesome recruiting appearance. That was proven last year when Solich, with the help of **Tom Osborne**, put together another top 15 recruiting class.

Solich and his staff have been working without the help of Osborne this year, and the results to this point have been fantastic. Before the Huskers even put the pads on for fall practice, Nebraska had racked up six verbal commitments and should have most of their class signed by the end of the November. Included in that class is a franchise running back, the state's top fullback prospect and four of the top ten players in Nebraska.

Every year Nebraska looks to sign two to three running backs, and this year the Huskers already have a verbal commitment from one of the nation's best. **Josh Davis** (6-feet, 194 pounds, with 4.4 speed in the 40-yard dash) of Loveland, Colo., is regarded as one of the very best tailback types

in the nation.

Nebraska fans will love the fact that Josh is the son of former Nebraska star **Tony Davis**, who ran for the Cornhuskers from 1973 through 1975.

"Oh, I think Josh is a much better running back than I was," chuckled proud papa Tony. "John is a great athlete, with excellent speed and great instincts when carrying the football. He will compete too, which is something I enjoy watching in him. He's strong and durable, which is important too. I am very proud of him and think he will have a better career at Nebraska than I did."

Josh rushed for over 1,400 yards, at an amazing 10.9 yards per carry and managed to find the end zone 26 times last season. He runs a blazing 10.57 in

## Stella To Sit

Freshman scholarship recruit **Randy Stella**, a 6-foot-2, 200-pound linebacker from Omaha (Benson), will sit out this season as a redshirt. Stella told the *Lincoln Journal Star* he was one point short of the NCAA minimum ACT score but planned to take the test again in September.

Even so, he would be a partial qualifier, which means he could practice. Although he would be allowed only four years to complete four seasons of eligibility as a partial academic qualifier, he can regain a fifth season by finishing 75 percent of the coursework toward a degree during those four years.

Stella is learning disabled, the newspaper reported, and a United States Justice Department decree issued in late May requires the NCAA to give learning disabled student-athletes who were partial qualifiers the additional season of eligibility if they meet the 75-percent requirement.

**Eric Johnson**, who began fall camp as the Cornhuskers' No. 1 weakside linebacker, was likely to be affected by the ruling, as were basketball players **Troy Piatkowski** and **Larry Florence**.

Johnson was listed as a junior last season, and he's listed as a junior again.

"We have been told it (the rule) will be grandfathered back to include athletes like Eric Johnson," **Al Papik**, Nebraska's director of compliance, told the *Omaha World-Herald*. ■





the 100-meter dash and a sensational 21.4 in the 200 meters. His physical strength — he can bench 290 pounds — is equally matched by his mental toughness. The decision to follow in his dad's footsteps was never in question.

"I have grown up with Nebraska football and they have always been number one in my heart," said Josh. "They offered me (a scholarship) at their camp and it took me less than a second to commit. Nebraska always turns out great tailbacks, including my dad, and it was just to good of an opportunity to play for the same great football program that my dad did."

Nebraska's other out-of-state commitment came from **Rob Blomeier** (6-0, 195, 4.5) of Lancaster (Manheim Township), Pa. Blomeier is a high school quarterback who is destined for the secondary at Nebraska.

Not a nationally heralded recruit, Blomeier is another player who was so impressive at the Huskers' summer camp that he was offered a scholarship and accepted on the spot. A year ago, Blomeier passed for 1,058 yards and ran for another 395, while on defense he managed 38 tackles and picked off four passes. Maryland and Georgia Tech were the other schools in the recruiting hunt.

The Huskers got on a recruiting roll in the state of Nebraska when fullback **Judd Davies** (6-1, 238, 4.7) of Millard North didn't hesitate in saying yes.

"I really love the Nebraska coaching staff and their academic program," said Davies. "Their offense is also the best in the country for a fullback that wants to carry the ball a little bit. Plus, I really feel Nebraska was the best place for me spiritually as well. Jesus Christ has made it possible for me to play football, and Nebraska has always been where I wanted to play."

Davies is a prototype Nebraska fullback. A great blocker, Davies is a hard runner who rushed for 480 yards last season before tearing an ACL. He has recovered 100 percent and has improved his bench to 365 and his squat to 545. Davies might also play baseball for the Cornhuskers after hitting .420 as a right fielder.

Depending on who you ask, Davies is regarded as the top player in the state. A case can also be made for **Ty Gifford** (6-0, 186, 4.6) of Lincoln (Southeast).

A wide receiver, Gifford

# REP REPORT

Keeping Up With **COLBY FREEMAN**

I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED in football all my life so I think I am ready for my senior year and all the outside publicity that comes with it. There are a few guys on the team who see some stuff about me on the internet or in a magazine and they tell me about it. As for us, we have a computer, but are not on the internet. We don't see that stuff, but we do read the magazines.

I think through all the recruiting process and any of the publicity that we have gotten, I think we have kept a pretty level head about it and my family has told me to keep a level head about it. The publicity is a big deal, but at the same time I am just a high school kid, playing high school football. The first time one of my teammates thinks that I am putting a college team or some magazine in front of them then I know that's not right.

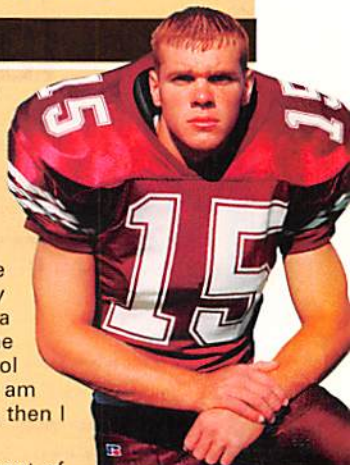
I would never put any kind of recruiting situation in front of my team.

I have been busy this summer. I went to three different camps at Nebraska, Texas and Texas A&M. That took up two and a half weeks and that is a lot of miles traveled and a lot of football being covered. That's the main thing I did this summer. I also went to a little church camp deal, but really the football camps and everyday when we got back from the camps we would throw on our own. About 5:30 p.m. in the afternoons myself and another quarterback on the team and our receivers and tight end would work out. Other than those camps, we pretty much did the same thing everyday. We would lift in the mornings and then come back in the afternoon to throw and lift again.

All three camps were totally different. I got more one-on-one coaching from A&M than anywhere else. Just getting to be with the quarterback coach the most was at A&M. At Texas they are really trying to sell their rebuilding process and what they are trying to get done there. Nebraska is pretty much eye opening to anyone because of the national championships they have obtained in the last three years. I guess you can look at all three different ways and get a lot of things out of it, but certainly you got three different viewpoints on college football.

Those three are the top schools that I am looking at knowing that nobody else has impressed me more than the three at the moment. I am not closing the door on anybody. I have talked to Tennessee and Kentucky and it would just be ignorant of me to shut anybody out at this point. I am just going by what I have heard and what I have been exposed to and what sounds impressive to me.

We should be pretty good. We are ranked third in Class 4A despite losing a few guys off last years team, but we have had a few guys step in and take a main role in our team. We have great skill guys coming back and we are looking pretty good. We just have to take it week by week and concentrate on the task at hand and do what it takes to win games. ■ — **As told to James Hale**



**Colby FREEMAN**

Throughout the 1998 football season, *Huskers Illustrated* will chronicle the recruiting process of Brownwood quarterback Colby Freeman, one of the top prospects in Texas.

played a big part in Southeast winning the state title a year ago with a perfect 13-0 record. Gifford excels at wide receiver and cornerback, and he returns kicks as well. He is an all-state forward in soccer in addition to start-

ing on the basketball team at Southeast.

Nebraska is the solid leader for Gifford's services, but he has yet to commit. For the moment at least, he wants to go through the recruiting process.

"Nebraska is way out in front, but at least for now I want to continue to talk to other schools," said Gifford. "Nebraska is a great program, maybe the very best in the country, and odds are I am going to go there, but I just want to make sure it's the right decision for me."

Gifford is also considering

## Early Birds

These players have given Nebraska verbal non-binding commitments.

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	40	High School
Josh Davis	TB	6-0	194	4.4	Loveland, Colo.
Rob Blomeier	QB/DB	6-0	194	4.5	Lancaster (Manheim Township), Pa.
Judd Davies	FB	6-1	238	4.7	Omaha (Millard North), Neb.
Taylor Gehman	FS	6-0	190	4.5	Omaha (Northwest), Neb.
Chris Loos	OL	6-3	275	5.4	Lincoln (Southeast), Neb.
Phil Peetz	DT	6-2	250	4.9	Elkhorn, Neb.



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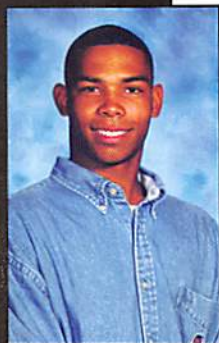
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Iowa State, Texas and UCLA.

Gifford's teammate at Southeast, Chris Loos (6-3, 275, 5.4), is rated as the number five prospect in the state. Loos was another player who was offered a scholarship at the Nebraska summer camp. He is a three-year starter on both sides of the ball, but is expecting to be an offensive guard or center at Nebraska.

"I have wanted to go to Nebraska all my life," said Loos. "There is no

**"Nebraska is way out in front, but at least for now I want to continue to talk to other schools."**  
Ty Gifford



better program in the country and when they offered, I didn't hesitate to accept. I have always known where I wanted to play my college football."

Phil Peetz (6-2, 250, 4.9) of Elkhorn is projected as a defensive tackle at Nebraska. Peetz, rated just behind Loos, is also a three-year starter on both sides of the ball. As a junior, he came up with 39 solo tackles, 47 assisted stops and 15 sacks. He can bench 335 pounds and might help the Cornhusker wrestling team — he finished third and second in the heavy-weight class the last two years, respectively.

"Nebraska has been the most successful team the past decade," said Peetz. "They have been a very strong program and I like working with their coaches. Their facilities are great and I really enjoy working out there."

Taylor Gehman (6-0, 190, 4.55) of Omaha (Northwest) is a strong safety that led the state in tackles a year ago. A very physical player, Gehman registered an astounding 160 tackles last season. He can bench 315, squat 400 and has run a 10.8 in the 100 meters while being named as the Northwest Male Athlete of the Year as a junior.

"Nebraska plays a very aggressive style of defense, which fits my style of play perfectly," said Gehman. "I have always wanted to play at Nebraska and look forward to the opportunity."



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# CAMPUS LIFE

As Seen Through The Eyes Of Josh Heskew

Terrell Gardner (6-6, 325, 5.1) of Omaha (Central) has only been playing organized football for two years. A raw talent, Gardner finished third this past summer in a national powerlifting competition, starts in hoops and put the shot 54 feet. Nebraska, Michigan and New Mexico State are the contenders early.

Cornerback **Brandon Williams** (5-10 1/2, 175, 4.4) of Omaha (Central) is a pure cover corner who is the best secondary prospect in the state. A year ago, Williams managed two interceptions as most teams avoided throwing in his direction. He also made 29 tackles and caught 11 passes for 187 yards and two touchdowns. A 10.5 100-meter sprinter, Williams has Michigan out in front early, with Nebraska, Kansas State, Wyoming, Colorado State and Iowa in the hunt.

Rounding out the top 10 in-state are running back **Lenzie Williams** (6-1, 195, 4.5) of Papillion (LaVista), offensive lineman **Tim Green** (6-5, 300, 5.25) of Omaha (Westside) and wide receiver **Michael Brooks** (6-0, 185, 4.5) of Omaha (Brownell).

Williams rushed for over 1,000 yards and 16 touchdowns last season and has Nebraska, Northwestern, Stanford, Colorado State and Oregon on his wish list. Green is the younger brother of Cornhusker redshirt freshman Mike and is expected to commit to the Cornhuskers as soon as he passes his ACT. Brooks is looking out of state at Iowa, Purdue and New Mexico State, but is continuing conversation with Nebraska.

Six commitments in the books and we haven't even reached September yet. It's business as usual for the top football program in the country. ■



If Ty Gifford commits to Nebraska then he will see a friendly face in teammate Chris Loos (above), an offensive lineman from Lincoln (Southeast), who has already given Frank Solich a verbal.

GO AHEAD AND DOUBT the Nebraska offensive line, Josh Heskew says.

"Teams will take us lightly, and then we'll come out and show them what's going on," said Heskew.

Heskew is the lone returning starter from Nebraska's 1997 offensive line. Getting the offensive line to develop into its typical dominant unit was one of the key elements of the Huskers' preseason camp.

"This is our time to gel, to get our timing down, to get used to playing with each other," Heskew said.

The Mustang, Okla., native was sidelined after February surgery to repair a bulging disk in his back. With Heskew absent, the offensive line struggled at times during spring practice.

Heskew said his back "feels great," which is good news for a line that will need his leadership as much as his talent this season.

Nebraska was forced to shuffle personnel in the offensive line during preseason camp because of lingering injuries. Heskew, however, is upbeat about the progress of the Husker line.

"We're picking things up," he said. "All we have to do is block out the little mistakes. It's just the little things you pick up during a game that are missing. (The first-year starters) don't know those things yet, but they'll pick them up in the first game."

Nebraska practiced twice a day from Aug. 8 to Aug. 14 without a day off. Heskew couldn't remember such a run under Tom Osborne.

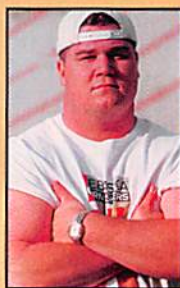
"My legs are dead," Heskew said Aug. 14. "Frank Solich makes sure we have great intensity. Seven straight days of gassers is tough. It always seems like you lose your legs at the beginning of camp, but by the first game, you're ready to go."

Heskew said that Solich has handled his first fall camp as head coach well. "Coach Solich will jump on you," Heskew said. "He'll make sure you're not taking your position for granted. A lot of guys need that sometimes."

Despite the concerns about Nebraska's offensive line, the Huskers were ranked No. 3 in the coaches' poll and No. 4 in *The Associated Press* rankings. Heskew, though, puts little stock in preseason polls.

"Everything that comes out in the preseason is speculation," he said. "I care more about the polls at the end of the season, in November and December. If we play like we're capable, there's no doubt we'll be the No. 1 team in the nation." ■

— As told to Steve Sipple



Josh HESKEW

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	NU vs. Florida	7:30 pm
Sept. 25	Iowa State	7:30 pm
Sept. 26	Missouri	7:30 pm
Oct. 16	Texas	7:30 pm
Oct. 17	Texas A&M	7:30 pm
Oct. 23	Oklahoma	7:30 pm
Oct. 24	Kansas	7:30 pm
Nov. 4	Colorado	7:30 pm
Nov. 6	Kansas State	7:30 pm
Nov. 13	Baylor	7:30 pm
Nov. 14	Texas Tech	7:30 pm

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Sept. 11	NU vs. Clemson	7 pm
Sept. 13	Clemson vs. Dartmouth	11 am
Sept. 13	NU vs. Stanford	1 pm
Sept. 25	Loyola-Chicago	7 pm
Sept. 27	Southwest Missouri State	1 pm
Oct. 2	Texas A&M	7 pm
Oct. 4	Texas	1 pm
Oct. 9	Portland	7 pm
Oct. 11	Colorado	1 pm
Oct. 23	Oklahoma	7 pm
Oct. 25	Oklahoma State	1 pm

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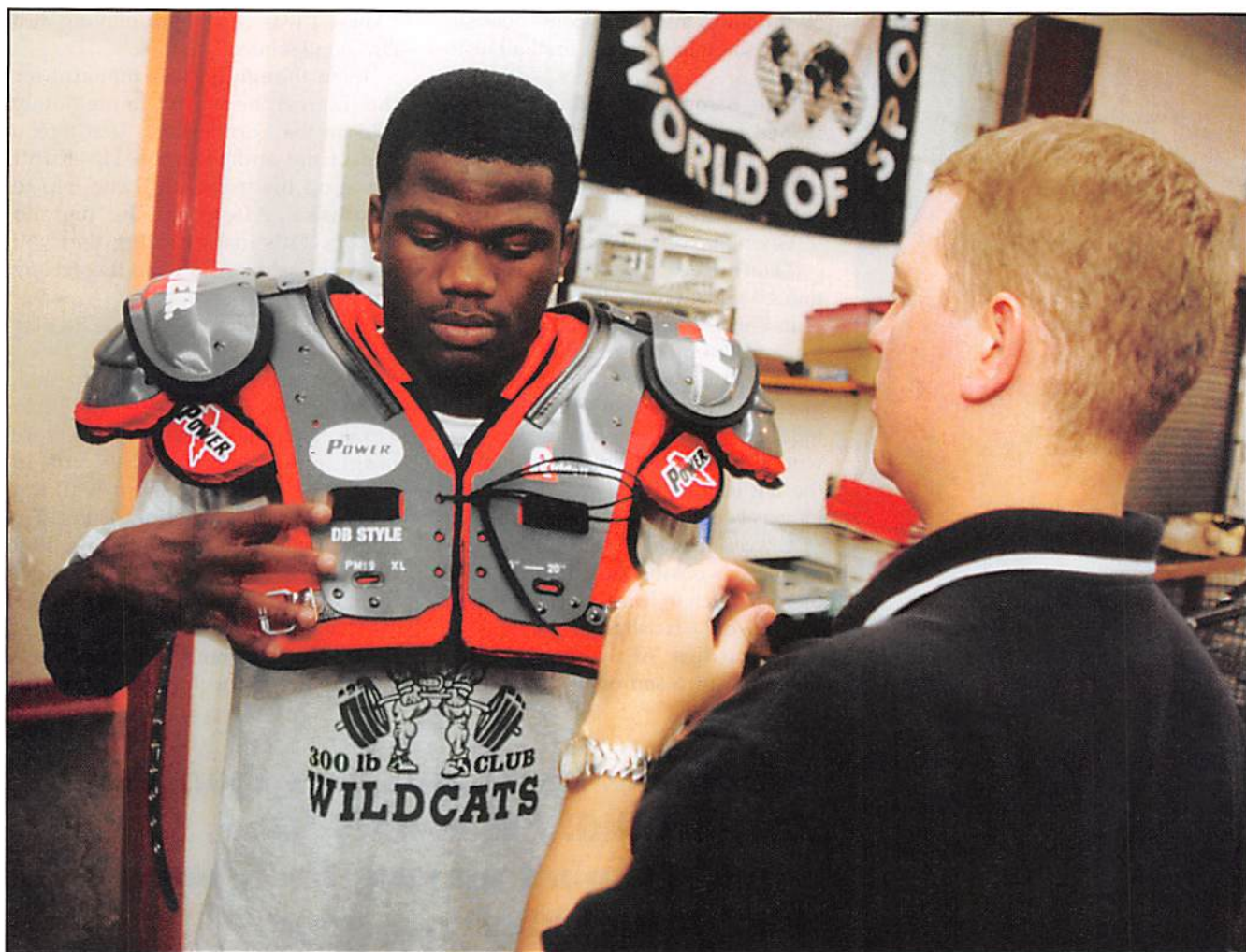
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Scott Bruhn

# ATRACKting Attention

***Keyuo Craver's track and field prowess led him from the rural plains of East Texas to the high-profile world of Nebraska football***

CREDIT NEBRASKA'S track and field coaches with a big assist in the recruitment of Keyuo Craver, a scholarship freshman defensive back on the Cornhusker football team. If not for them, Craver might be at another Big 12 school, probably one in Texas.

As it is, he'll likely be one of a handful of freshmen who will play without redshirting.

"We're counting on some young kids," Nebraska defensive backs coach George Darlington said the first day freshmen practiced. "You have to wait and see how they adjust, but we expect Keyuo to play."

Darlington was impressed by

Craver's athleticism.

"He runs easy," said Darlington. "It's like he ought to be a miler or a quarter miler. He looks like he could run forever."

Defensive backs need sprinters' speed, of course, which Craver also has. He ran the fastest time in the 40-yard dash when the freshmen were tested the first week in August — 4.60 seconds. And he was the Texas Class 2A high school state champion in the 200 meters (22.04) last spring.

It was his success in the triple jump, however, that attracted Cornhusker track and field coaches. He was a three-time Texas state champion,

jumping 50 feet, 4 inches as a senior.

What makes that even more impressive is that Harleton High School didn't have a triple jump pit. It didn't even have a track, for that matter.

"We never practiced on the triple jump," said Craver. "All we did was run on the grass and gravel."

His potential in the triple jump is untapped, and Nebraska's track and field coaches "were talking to me about doing the triple jump here," he said. "But my main focus is football. If it happens so that I do triple jump, then I'd be willing to do it. But I hadn't confirmed anything with the coaches."

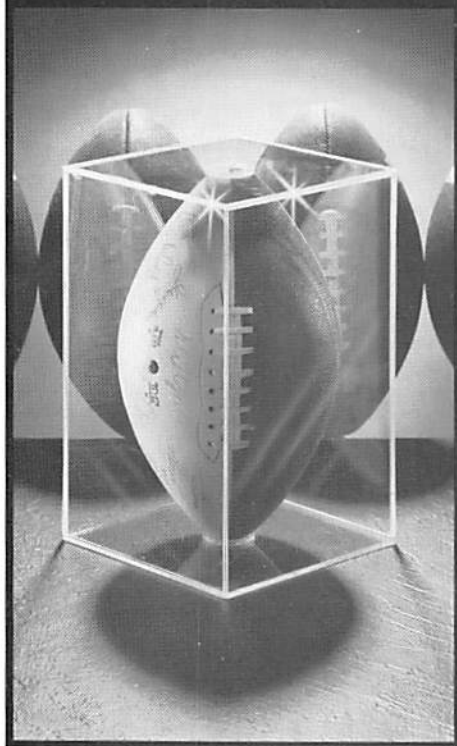
"I don't know for sure whether I'll be doing it or not."

He much prefers football to track. "No contest," he said.

Craver's football accomplishments were even more impressive. As a senior, he rushed for 3,024 yards and



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50 touchdowns, the second-best single-season totals in prep football history.

The 6-foot, 180-pound Craver rushed for 2,329 yards and scored 36 touchdowns as a junior. But Nebraska envisioned him as a defensive back, either a corner or a safety.

Giving up offense wasn't easy.

"Definitely, I get jealous sometimes," said Craver. "But that's all part of it. This is the best team in the country, and I'm pretty sure they wouldn't put me at a position that would hurt me. They (the coaches) feel that I'd be more comfortable on defense and that would be my best shot at making it to the big leagues, so I was all for it, as long as I could help the team out."

Craver arrived in Lincoln on July 6 to begin working out. Even though there is much to learn, he came expecting to avoid a redshirt.

"Regardless of whether you're a freshman or a senior, you're always

I knew I was capable of playing at a Division I school."

Even though he was thankful for the interest, he wasn't immediately sold on the Cornhuskers. That took a little time and thought. He didn't make up his mind until the trip to Nebraska. After that, he had no doubts. "It's just a feeling that you have," he said. "And I had that feeling here."

Coming from east Texas, he also felt cold during his visit.

"I was freezing, actually," he said. "You know, 50 degrees is cold in Texas, and they (the players) were laughing. I was bundled up in sweaters, and they were walking around in these little jumpsuits. I'm like, 'I know you're all freezing.' But they were used to it. They said I hadn't seen anything yet."

That didn't scare him off, though. Before returning home, he committed.

Craver came to Lincoln in July, in

**"Nebraska had more fans than they (Baylor) did. I was like, 'God, I wouldn't mind playing for a team like this.' It just blew my mind."**

*Keyuo Craver on his reaction during an unofficial recruiting visit to Baylor last year*

learning," he said. "But I'm looking to learn, and I'm looking to play (immediately)."

"I didn't come in just to watch. I hope I can get in and play."

Before he had been contacted by any member of the Husker coaching staff, Cornhusker fans, or at least their willingness to travel long distances, played a role in Craver's decision to attend Nebraska.

He made an unofficial recruiting visit to Baylor on the weekend Nebraska played the Bears in Waco. Nebraska was well-represented at Floyd Casey Stadium on that rain-soaked night.

"Nebraska had more fans than they (Baylor) did," Craver said. "I was like, 'God, I wouldn't mind playing for a team like this.' It just blew my mind."

The next week, he got a telephone call from Cornhusker assistant Turner Gill, for which "I was thankful," said Craver, who made his official visit to Lincoln in mid-December. "I was more thankful than I was surprised because

part to adjust to being away from home.

"It was a good thing I came up here early because it helped me out a lot," he said. "A lot of guys are homesick."

Craver has missed his family. But he hasn't had a problem adapting to a rural Midwestern environment. Harleton, located two hours east of Dallas, is no metropolis. It has a population of about 1,000, Craver said. "It's a real small town. It's a lot of farming, hay and cows and dairy products."

His family moved there from Dallas when he was in the sixth grade. At first when he went to the playground, he would be distracted by the surroundings. "I was over looking at the cows eat grass," he said. "Everybody just laughed at me and was like, 'You loser. Come over here and play ball.'"

There are no distractions now. Football comes first. And track is a distant second.

As for cows, well, you can't see any from Tom Osborne Field at Memorial Stadium anyway. ■



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## Tony DAVIS

*High school All-America Josh Davis is primed to continue the legacy started by his father in 1973, Tom Osborne's first year as head coach at Nebraska*

**T**ony Davis was sitting in the west stands at Memorial Stadium near the 10-yard line at the north end of the field when Gale Sayers ran 99 yards for a touchdown against Nebraska in 1963.

Sayers "ran right by me," said Davis, who was 10 years old at the time.

The memory is one of the most vivid among many from the Cornhusker football games he attended growing up in Tecumseh, Neb. "I was always a fan," Davis recalled recently.

Like many youngsters back then, he and his friends would try to avoid buying tickets by climbing the cyclone fence at the south end of the stadium and sprinting en masse across the practice field to the knothole-section bleachers where they hoped to lose themselves in the crowd.

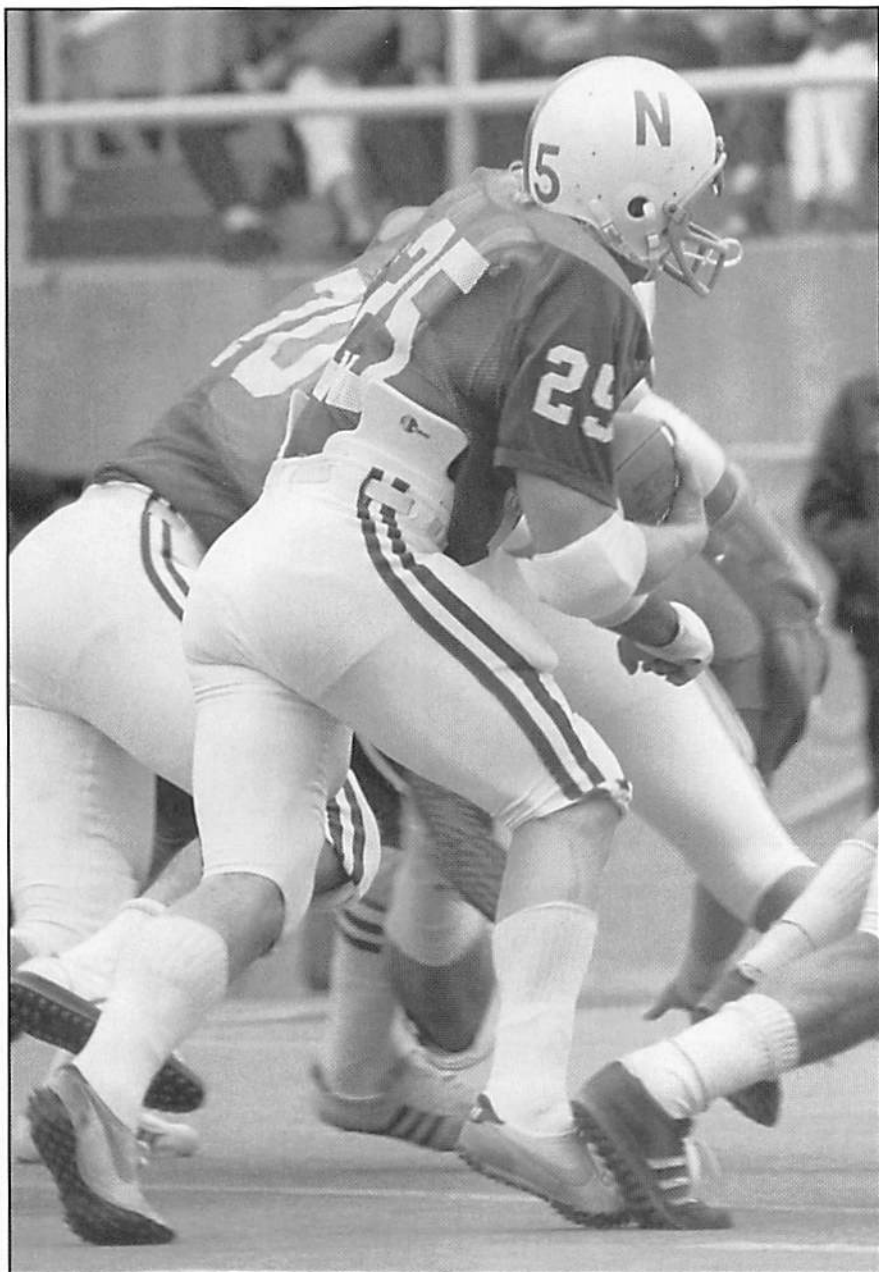
The key to success was scaling the fence in large groups. The campus police couldn't stop everyone. And once the youngsters got over the fence, they could get away if they had decent speed.

It wasn't that they couldn't afford a knothole ticket. Rather, it was the challenge.

Ten years after Sayers' Big Eight record-setting run, in September of 1973, Davis scored two touchdowns and rushed for 147 yards as the Cornhuskers defeated UCLA, 40-13, at Memorial Stadium. The game was his first at Nebraska. It also was Tom Osborne's first as head coach.

The youngster who had once cheered the Cornhuskers was being cheered himself.

A year or two from now, Davis expects to be cheering his youngest



son, Josh, at Memorial Stadium. Josh, who is about to begin his senior year in high school, made an oral commitment to accept a scholarship from Nebraska after attending the Big Red football camp in June.

Josh, like his dad, is a running back. Perhaps they can become the first Cornhusker father and son duo to rush for 1,000 or more yards in a season, said a proud Tony, who rushed for 1,008 yards as a sophomore and finished with 2,153 career yards, a school record at the time.

He played I-back his first varsity season, then moved to fullback. The position switch "probably did two things," he said. "One, it made me a

better player. And two, maybe more importantly, I didn't get the crap beat out of me another three years," he said. "At I-back, they just beat the crap out of you."

His position coach, Mike Corgan, expected I-backs to respond in kind, to initiate contact rather than avoid it. Corgan was a disciplinarian and demanded toughness in those he coached.

"When you had Coach Corgan, everything else was kind of a side issue," said Davis, a prototypical Corgan back. He was known as "Tough Tony," and not just because of the alliteration.

Davis has instilled that same quality



in Josh. Unlike his dad, however, Josh is more reserved.

"Josh is extremely intense, but his emotions are kept in check," Tony said. "I don't allow any celebration by my players, at least by themselves. They can celebrate as a team."

Davis, an account executive for a discount futures brokerage in Loveland, Colo., serves as the offensive coordinator for the Loveland High School football team.

"I love coaching," he said. "It's a passion. I certainly don't do it for the money."

He might, however, after Josh and his twin sister, Dara, graduate in the spring. The other Davis children, Tony and Brandon, have already finished high school. Tony, who just graduated, plans to work a year before deciding whether to continue his education. Brandon is a ski instructor.

Dara, like Josh, figures to go to college, probably Baylor, on an athletic scholarship. She's a softball player. Recruiting, particularly as it has related to Josh, has been an eye-opener.

"I was recruited. And I've recruited kids myself. But until your son is recruited, you have no idea what it's like," said Davis, a fourth-round NFL draft pick who played six seasons with the Cincinnati Bengals and Tampa Bay Buccaneers and one season with the USFL's Boston Breakers before returning to Nebraska. "It's unbelievable. Josh made the verbal commitment, but the recruiting hasn't stopped. He has gotten eight or 10 offers from other schools since then. It's quite flattering. But he's a Husker."

Josh was entering the seventh grade when the family moved to Loveland from Lincoln. But he had developed an affection for Nebraska football while he was in elementary school.

Even so, Tony didn't know if his son would pick the Cornhuskers.

After Josh told coach Frank Solich of his decision, he and his dad talked about it on a quick trip to Tecumseh before returning to Loveland the Big Red camp.

Tony told Josh about growing up a Cornhusker fan and sneaking into games at Memorial Stadium. It was different for him, Tony told Josh, because he had "only lived a short period of time here."

That was true, Josh said. But, he added: "I've always been a Nebraska fan."

Tony was pleased. "I thought, cool," he said. ■

# 10 QUESTIONS

Huskers Illustrated talks with tight end **SHELDON JACKSON**

## 1 Do you prefer VH1 or MTV?

"I watch BET (Black Entertainment Television) . . . I used to like MTV when it first came out because they played music 24 hours a day. I knew every song. I'd watch it all night. Now, it's too commercialized."

## 2 Who has better luck with the ladies, linemen or skill-position players?

"Tight ends. And it's not luck. We are skilled when it comes to women. All of us, even the young bucks like (Aaron) Golliday and (Jon) Bowling. They're going to carry on the tradition."

## 3 Do prefer to play on grass or artificial turf?

"Grass. I feel like I'm faster on grass. I feel quicker. I can cut better."

## 4 If you could be any animal, what would it be?

"A white grizzly bear with black stripes — a combination of a grizzly bear and white bengal tiger. Uniqueness. It matches my personality."

## 5 What would you say was the most embarrassing moment of your freshman year?

"I threw up after running the second 300-yard shuttle run (during preseason physical testing)."

## 6 What was the second-most embarrassing moment of your freshman season?

"(Former Nebraska line-backer) Doug Colman hit me so hard I sneezed and shot snot all over my facemask. That was my introduction to college football. Nobody knew it, though. I got myself back together before the next play."

## 7 Would you ever give professional wrestling a try?

"Heck yes. If Dennis Rodman can do it, I can. There's a lot of money in it. I know what my name would be, too — Chocolate Thunder."

## 8 Would you say that the role of blocking by a tight end is important or overrated?

"I'm going to say it's a mix of important and overrated. It's overly important, if that makes any sense. It's necessary, but when I look at other schools, they don't do it and they seem to get by. All of them, from Ohio State on down."

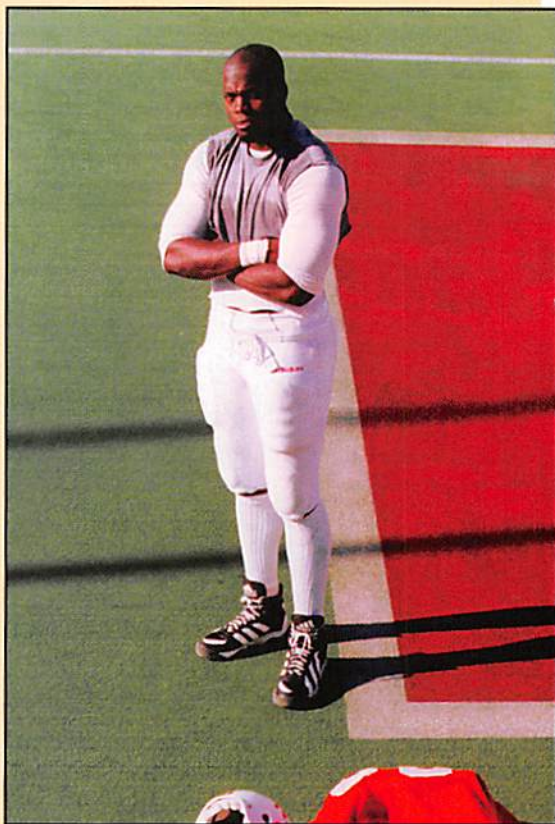
## 9 What do you like best about Lincoln?

"Are you kidding me? (Long pause). It's having all the movie theaters within a block radius."

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— Steve Sipple



Sheldon Jackson may one day find himself in the ring as "Chocolate Thunder" in the world of professional wrestling.



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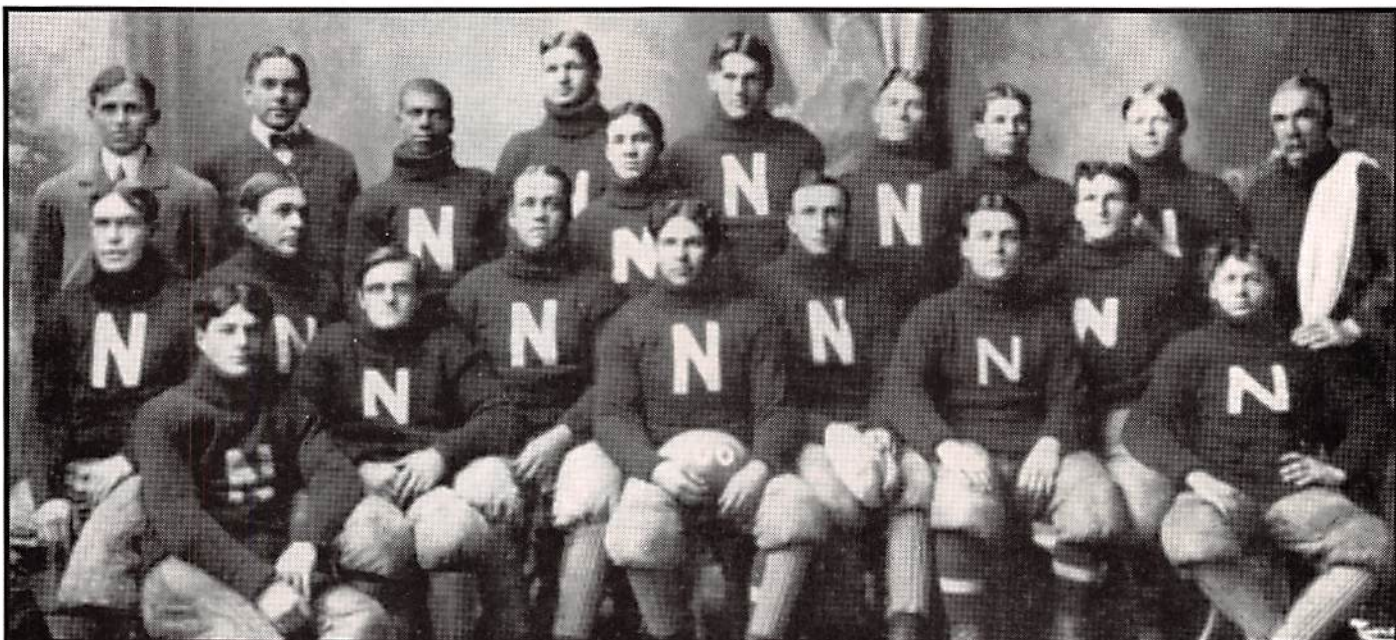
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# Heating Up In Minnesota

*As Minnesota high school star Michael Bauer's stock has risen in the eyes of college coaches, so too has the possibility that the 6-foot-8 forward will choose to play college basketball at Nebraska*

By Dudley E. DAWSON

**E**ven though his summer was cut short by a broken ankle, Minnesota prep basketball star Michael Bauer clearly made a name for himself.

Bauer, a 6-foot-8, 200-pound forward from Hastings, Minn., is no longer just a regional standout.

"Michael really had one of the better Nike camps and watched his stock just shoot up," said Dave Telep of *Recruiter's Handbook*. "All the big boys really took stock and are really looking closely at a guy who has a world of talent."

Bauer, who averaged 17 points and 10 rebounds last season, is now hearing from Michigan, Kansas and Kentucky, in addition to Minnesota, Nebraska and Northwestern.

"It's been real interesting," Hastings coach Darrin Slojkowski said. "It was already pretty crazy in July (before Nike), but it has picked up. It has given him a lot to sort through and a lot of options to consider."

Two of those options will certainly be the homestate Golden Gophers and the Cornhuskers, who have been in contact via assistant coach Jimmy Williams.

"Coach Williams is a great guy and has been there all along," Bauer said. "They have had a lot of success recently and, along with Minnesota, (Nebraska) is a school I am certainly considering very strongly."

Slojkowski said Bauer plays much like former Utah star and current New Jersey Net Keith Van Horn, who is the young man's favorite player.

"A lot of people have made that comparison because he's pretty talented and pretty skilled," Slojkowski said. "He has long arms and plays a lot bigger than he looks. He's a tough kid and well-rounded both on the court and off."

Bauer led his team to its first St. Paul Suburban Conference title in 39 years last season.

"One of the reasons that that happened was because of Michael's leadership," Slojkowski said. "He plays hard. There is not a lot of dog in him. He also makes very smart decisions and that carries over to his teammates, who try to do the same."

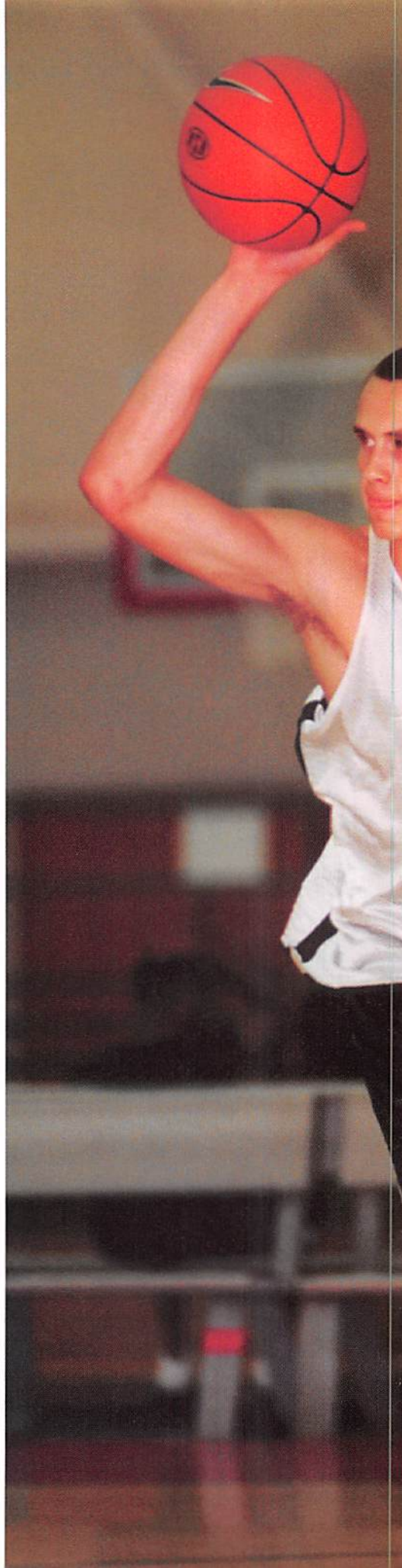
Bauer is not just a star on the basketball court, but on the track as well. He high-jumped 6-8 this spring and also ran a 53-second 400-meter dash.

Bauer's broken ankle occurred at the Orlando Super Showcase in mid-July, but, according to Slojkowski, he should be back as good as new when the season rolls around.

"It's actually a blessing that he broke it instead of just spraining it severely," Slojkowski said. "A sprain is something that would have hampered him some throughout the whole year, but with this, it should be as strong as ever and not give him any problems down the line because it was a clean break."

He is a young man that loves his

**After a strong showing at the Nike basketball camp in July, Michael Bauer has quickly become one of the most talked-about high school seniors in the country.**







basketball, but does have his priorities in order.

"God, family and friends are the only things more important to me than basketball," Bauer said.

#### A LITTLE COULD MEAN A LOT

One of Nebraska's biggest recruits this year may be new assistant coach Cleo Little, a former assistant coach at perennial prep basketball power Mount Zion Academy in Durham, N.C.

Immediate dividends could pay off this fall with the possible signing of current 6-8 Mount Zion standout Kenny Booker, who is currently under the tutelage of Joel Hopkins.

"Booker is very interested in Nebraska and (Little) is undoubtedly the connection," Telep said. "It could not only really pay off this season, but in the future because Joel always has great players."

Booker currently has Nebraska at the top of a list that also includes Missouri, along with SEC schools Mississippi State, Ole Miss and Kentucky.

"I don't think Kentucky is really that interested and I think Nebraska is clearly the leader at this point," Telep said. "I really wouldn't even be surprised if there is more than one Mount Zion kid who ends up there next year." ■



Nebraska head coach Danny Nee hopes to get his team pointed in the right direction when the Huskers open the season on Nov. 14 against UNC-Greensboro.

## HUSKER MEN'S HOOPS SCHEDULE RELEASED

THE NEBRASKA MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM WILL OPEN the 1998-99 season on Saturday, Nov. 14, when the Huskers host the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. The remainder of the schedule, which was released by the Big 12 in late July, is highlighted by the Huskers' participation in the Top of the World Classic in Fairbanks, Alaska.

After opening practice on Saturday, Oct. 17, the Husker hoopsters will play two exhibition games, facing Pella Windows Basketball on Nov. 5 and Global Sports on Nov. 10.

Following the regular season opener, Nebraska will be joined by Villanova, Virginia, Wisconsin and Arkansas in Alaska for the Top of the World Classic. Nebraska will face Villanova in the first round.

Other highlights on the Huskers' 1998-99 slate include visits to the Devaney Sports Center by 1998 NIT Champion Minnesota, in-state rival Creighton, and WAC championship contender Tulsa. NCAA Tournament qualifier Davidson joins Southwest Texas State and Colgate in the 12th Annual Ameritas Classic, which kicks off Dec. 4 in Lincoln.

The conference schedule kicks off on Jan. 2, when the Huskers travel to Missouri. Nebraska will play its first home conference game on Jan. 10 against Texas and its new head coach Rick Barnes. Other notable home conference games include Kansas (Jan. 27) and Oklahoma State (Feb. 17).

Nebraska is currently slated for two Saturday night appearances on ESPN, hosting Iowa State on Feb. 13 and playing at Texas Tech one week later on Feb. 20. The Huskers will also play six games that are scheduled for ESPN regional coverage.

The Huskers enter the 1998-99 season with a streak of eight consecutive post-season appearances intact. After posting a 20-12 mark last season, Nebraska is led by honorable mention All-Big 12 performer Venson Hamilton. Including Hamilton, the Huskers return six players who started at least 10 games a season ago.

For ticket information for the upcoming season, fans can contact the Nebraska Athletic Ticket Office at 1-800-8 BIG RED or (402) 472-3111. ■



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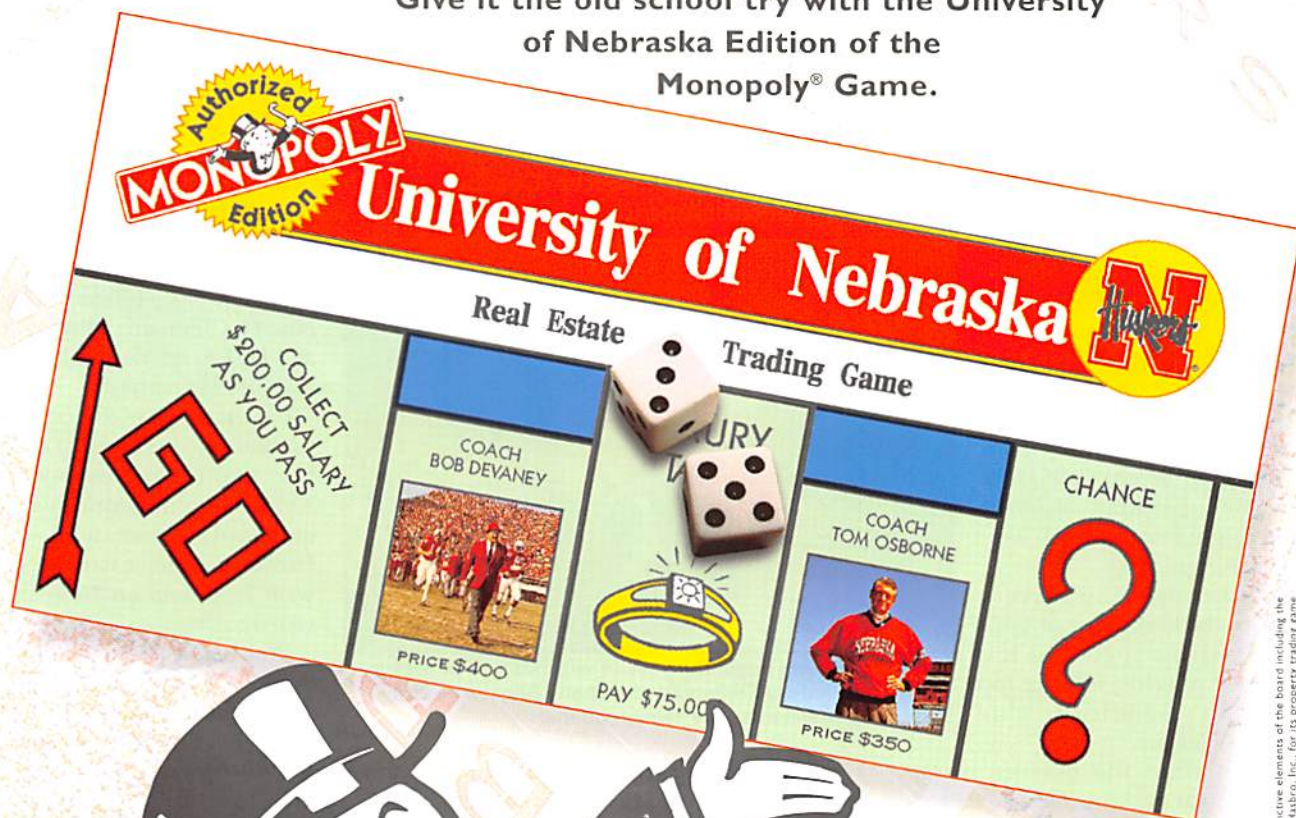


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# Goal-den Opportunity

*Injuries open door for others to contribute to eighth-ranked Husker women's soccer team*

**W**hat Nebraska women's soccer coach John Walker hoped would be a great benefit for two of his star players this summer turned into one of the darker weekends in the history of the program.

Within a span of 72 hours last month, All-Big 12 picks Lindsay Eddleman and Jenny Benson went down with injuries while playing with the Denver Diamonds of the USISL W-1 League. Eddleman, a junior from Lakewood, Colo., broke the fifth metatarsal bone in her left foot and is expected to miss at least the first two weeks of the season.

The news was worse for Benson. The junior from Huntington Beach, Calif., tore the anterior cruciate ligament in her right knee and will likely redshirt this year.

Walker said the players were in the best shape of their careers after spending the summer playing for the top team in America's elite women's league.

"You want the players to stay sharp, but at the same time you always keep your fingers crossed," Walker said. "With the number of ACL injuries in the sport right now, it's something you do think about. It's almost at an epidemic rate."

At Nebraska, for example, three of the 22 players on this fall's roster will start the season sidelined with knee injuries. Junior defender Heather Brown could miss half the season after having surgery in the spring. Incoming freshman Karla Ledford is on a similar rehabilitation schedule to Brown but will likely redshirt, Walker said.

Eddleman and Benson, both under-20 U.S. National Team members, combined for 17 goals and 44 points last season. Eddleman is a striker who earned second-team All-America hon-

ors in 1996 and was Nebraska's third-leading scorer a year ago.

From the midfield, Benson was Nebraska's best playmaker. Both she and Eddleman had started the Huskers' previous 46 games.

Some optimism still surrounds the program, which opens its fifth season at home Sept. 4 against Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Nebraska is ranked eighth in the preseason top 25 poll released by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America.



John Walker will begin the season without two of his top players — Lindsay Eddleman and Jenny Benson — and three others will miss the season opener.

"We have not changed our goals," Walker said. "We still expect to challenge for the Big 12 title and a trip to the NCAA Tournament. We are just going to have to work a little harder to do it."

Nebraska opened practice earlier this month. The Huskers return seven starters, including the nation's leading scorer, two All-Americans and five first-team All-Big 12 Conference players. Add in a seven-player recruiting class that has been ranked among the top 10 in the nation and Walker was planning to field one of his deepest teams ever.

"It's ironic because we expected this to be our deepest team," Walker said. "Now, the players that were supposed to provide depth will have to contribute immediately."

And by "immediately," Walker

means the very start of the season. To complicate matters, at least three Huskers will miss the season opener because of commitments to the Canadian National Team. Goalkeeper Karina LeBlanc, defender Isabelle Morneau, midfielder Amy Walsh and possibly incoming midfielder Shannon Tanaka will be competing in a World Cup-qualifying tournament with the Canadians.

Once they return, Nebraska will face one its toughest schedules ever.

Among the preseason top 25, the Huskers face No. 7 Portland, No. 11 Texas A&M, No. 14 Clemson, Minnesota and UCLA, teams tied for 15th and No. 24 Stanford.

The challenge is obvious, but Walker is convinced it's one his team can overcome. Nebraska will count heavily on Kim Engesser, who set a Husker single-season record with 55 points on 26 goals a year ago.

Walsh is expected to fill the shoes of All-America Kari Uppinghouse in Nebraska's midfield. Sharolta Nonen, a third team All-American last year, is the cornerstone of the Huskers' defense.

Freshmen Kelly Rheem, Megan Anderson and Najah Williams could also contend for starting spots.


The obstacles are many, but Walker isn't giving up hope of his team matching or exceeding last year's 18-4 mark. Nebraska also could benefit from an expanded NCAA field. For the first time this season, the NCAA will invite 48 teams. Nebraska qualified the last two years when 32 teams advanced.

"We still have personnel and we still have a lot of talent," Walker said. "Obviously, we're going to be extremely young, and we can't afford to have more than one or two more injuries." ■ — By Todd Henrichs



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# Three's Company

***Guided by the senior leadership of Jaime Krondak, Megan Korver and Fiona Nepo, Nebraska looks to put aside last season's disappointment of missing the Final Four for the first time in three years***

**By Todd HENRICHs**

**L**ast season was full of frustrations for Nebraska senior Jaime Krondak.

First, the Lincoln product was sidelined by a back injury at midseason. Then, after the pain subsided enough to allow for her to return to action, Krondak and the Huskers saw their hopes of a third straight Final Four appearance end with a regional loss at Long Beach State.

Krondak, one of three Husker seniors, hopes to make up for that disappointment this season. Rest and rehabilitation have helped her back, and her presence on the court figures to help the Huskers' bid to return to the Final Four this year.

"All of last year was very frustrating," Krondak said. "Just physically, I could tell I wasn't able to do the movements and do them as quick as I did before the back started bothering me."

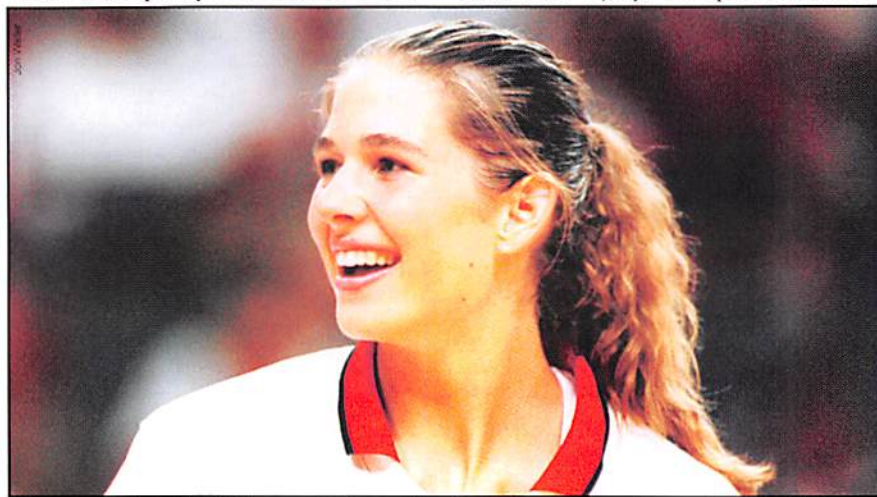
"But I'm to the point now that I can do everything basically as well as I could before. I'm just going to do the best I can to help the team out in any way."

Leadership figures to be one of Krondak's greatest contributions this season. Nebraska's title hopes for 1998 rest on the shoulders of Krondak and fellow seniors Megan Korver and Fiona Nepo. Collectively, they are already being compared to Allison Weston, Christy Johnson and Billie Winsett, seniors who helped will the Huskers to their first national championship in 1995.

Nebraska coach Terry Pettit said he's not sure that comparison is fair,

but does understand the benefit of having an experienced team back.

"When we've had teams that have played at their absolute best, teams that have really played to their potential and beyond, it's because we've had a core group of people," Pettit said. "I think we're pretty comfortable know-



**Jaime Krondak should have a lot to smile about this season after enduring a frustrating 1997 season in which she missed time with a back injury and Nebraska missed out on a third straight Final Four appearance.**

ing that we have three really strong players that are seniors. You can't get it done with just one leader."

The Huskers learned that a year ago when two-time All-America Lisa Reitsma was their lone senior. Nebraska begins 1998 with five returning starters and the momentum of winning 12 of its final 13 matches a year ago. More importantly, the players say there's a real hunger to reach the Final Four.

The last time Nebraska missed the Final Four was 1994. A year later,

Krondak was an freshman who immediately was impressed by the focus of Weston, Johnson and Winsett.

"There was major determination on the seniors' part that year," Krondak said. "We noticed a difference in leadership between that year when I was a freshman and the last couple years. I want to be in the position to reflect that on to my team because that's why we won a national championship."

Nebraska begins 1998 ranked fifth in the USA Today/American Volleyball Coaches Association preseason poll, which had Penn State claiming the No. 1 ranking.

"For us, (the rankings) don't mean anything until someday the team doesn't show up in them," Pettit said. "Then you might hear me say we sure wished we were in there."

Pettit calls this perhaps his deepest team. Nepo is among the nation's most experienced setters. Korver and Tonia Tauke, a junior from Council Bluffs, Iowa, were standouts as middle blockers last season.

On the outside, junior Mandy Monson is a returning starter. After Krondak's injury, her spot was taken

by Angie Oxley, a freshman who was pulled out of a redshirt season.

One of the most watched battles will be to see who takes over for Reitsma, whose 561 kills were 29 percent of Nebraska's team total last season. Pettit promises a more balanced offense this year, but still will be looking for a big step up from sophomores Katie Jahnke and Nancy Meendering, who likely will be first-time starters.

"I think we still have some go-to players," Pettit said. "Mandy Monson had a very strong end to the season



last year. Tonia was very strong in the spring and developed quite a bit offensively.

"And whoever replaces Reitsma, whether it's Meendering or Jahnke, I think will average three or four kills a game."

Nebraska isn't without defensive specialists either, with junior Nikki Henk returning.

The Huskers opened practice Aug. 11 in preparation for the season opener against Creighton on Sept. 1. Nebraska also faces an early season test against defending national champion Stanford.

"I don't think there's a weekend where we're not going to have pretty competitive volleyball," Pettit said. "It's a pretty interesting season. It should keep the fans awake."

Of course, there are concerns entering the season. Each of Nebraska's seniors entered this year with at least some minor injury or illness problem. Nepo has been bothered by an ankle sprain during the same span in which mononucleosis zapped some of Korver's energy.

As practice opened, however, the seniors didn't talk about areas of concern, but rather areas where they can improve.

"Coach has said before, and I believe firmly, that you take on initiative and you become a leader by example, not by word of mouth," Korver said. "I need to play all the way around and I need to step it up and be a better player in the back row."

Korver has extra incentive since she missed out on Nebraska's 1995 title run while playing for George Washington as a freshman. Korver, however, did get a look at the Huskers when the Colonials came to Lincoln for a regular-season match.

Nepo absorbed what she could from the seniors starting with the first time she stepped in the Coliseum.

"I watched them during practice and watched how they tried to act off the court," Nepo said. "I learned from just the way they lived and just the way they played volleyball."

Pettit is confident Nepo and her senior counterparts learned well.

"Those people in particular need to shepherd everybody in the same direction," Pettit said. "They certainly have done it in the spring. They've done it in the summer."

"I just get a sense they're ready to go." ■

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## Huskers Defensive About Offensive Inexperience

*With a new quarterback and just one returning starter on the offensive line, Nebraska's offense looks to put the doubters to rest against Louisiana Tech*



**Mike BABCOCK**

to the season-opening Eddie Robinson Classic against Louisiana Tech.

Sophomore Bobby Newcombe will be Nebraska's quarterback, of course, with redshirt freshman Eric Crouch as the top backup. Ironically, the inexperience of Newcombe and Crouch was among the reasons Solich was willing to break the rule and schedule the game. "We wanted to have another game at home prior to going on the road with our inexperienced line and inexperienced quarterbacks," he said.

The "at home" part was a significant factor in the decision to play in the Eddie Robinson Classic, as was the return of eight players with starting experience on defense. "I don't believe we would have done it without the experience and talent we have on defense," Solich said.

The implication seemed to be that the defense might have to carry the Cornhuskers early in the season. At least, that's how Solich's remarks were interpreted by reporters at a news conference prior to the start of two-a-day practices.

Many of the questions that followed were based on such an interpretation.

When asked if the offense might need time to develop, rush end Mike Rucker said, "If we need to carry them, if they need our help, we're there to give it to them."

Defensive coordinator Charlie McBride was asked a similar question, to which he replied: "I don't think a team is built that way, and I don't think we stress to our players anything like that."

Newcombe, who took only a handful of snaps at quarterback before switching to wingback as a true freshman, seemed confident the offense would hold up its end from the beginning.

As for talk the defense might have to carry the offense early in the season, "I haven't really heard that too much," said Newcombe. "Our focus offensively is to prepare well

CONVENTIONAL COACHING wisdom says you don't play a preseason football game without an experienced quarterback.

The Cornhuskers had a veteran quarterback each time they played in the Kickoff Classic: Turner Gill in 1983, Steve Taylor in 1988 and Tommie Frazier in 1994.

"This will be the first time we attempt a preseason game like this without an experienced quarterback," Solich said in reference

for the season.

"Whether people think the defense is going to carry us or not, we feel that we have the ability and the talent level on offense — offensive line and backfield — to produce points for the team. We also feel that the defense is going to do a great job this year, that it's just going to be a balanced team."

Senior fullback Joel Makovicka was even more adamant about that.

"It's a thing where we really don't listen to what people are saying about how good we're going to be, how bad we're going to be offensively," he said. "We know we have a lot of talent. We hope we can come together in the three weeks of fall practice before our first game and go out and play well in that first game. It could take a few games to put it together. But I think we'll be a good offensive team."

How good the Cornhusker offense will be depends as much on the development of a line with only one returning starter — center Josh Heskew — as on the development of Newcombe.

The line's development was slowed after off-season surgeries limited junior tackles Adam Julch and Jeff Clausen during two-a-day practices.

Julch, who was listed at No. 1 on the left side on the pre-fall depth chart, and Clausen, who shared No. 1 with junior Jason Schwab on the

right side, practiced only once a day. "If we forced them to go through two-a-days, we could probably set them back instead of helping them," Solich said.

Heskew dismissed the line's lack of experience. "We've got some young players who will be a factor this season," he said. "That's all right if they want to doubt the offensive line because we'll just surprise them when we start playing."

Solich added that the offensive line should be fine once everyone is healthy, and "if you look at the personality of the players at quarterback, it makes you feel a little bit more comfortable."

Even so, "having a good personality and having a good work ethic and doing all the things in the off-season you need to do to prepare yourself isn't quite like stepping into a stadium with 60,000, 70,000, 80,000 (fans) — it depends on where you're playing — and responding," he said.

That's a big reason Nebraska is playing in the Eddie Robinson Classic.

Solich wants to find out how Newcombe responds. ■



**Joel Makovicka (45) and Josh Heskew (59) are two players who will be counted upon to provide veteran leadership to a young offense.**



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